

TOUSSAINT  
L'OUVERTURE

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LESLIE PINCKNEY HILL



**S. G. & E. L. ELBERT**

Continuing your  
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Cheung, Pa.

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TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE





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*Toussaint Louverture.*



# TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

A DRAMATIC HISTORY

BY

LESLIE PINCKNEY HILL



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TO  
OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD  
Friend of the Lowly, Champion of Liberal Causes



## FOREWORD

It is important that the readers of this story should understand at the outset that this is not a drama intended for the modern stage. I have had in mind rather the production of a work that might set forth dramatically something more than a decade of Negro achievement under the leadership of Negro genius. I have deliberately chosen to tell the story amply for those who care to preserve a precious record rather than to follow the limitations and prohibitions of a present-day cinema audience. I have also, in full view of all the risks, deliberately chosen blank verse as the only vehicle worthy of the dignity and elevation of my theme. We seem, as Mr. Trevelyan says, to have lost both the taste and tradition for this high medium. Serious and sensitive writers must undertake to restore both. I can only hope that patient hospitality may be accorded to that measure and rhythm most expressive of the power and cadence of our tongue.

Hayti has come to be a sort of challenge to the democratic sentiments and pretensions of our time. The little island suggests to the average American certain vexations which it presented to our marines during the period of our late paternal investment. Nevertheless, it was in Hayti that the greatest of Negroes rose up to strike the shackles of slavery from the limbs and minds of his race forever, and thus to serve mightily the cause of American independence. The conflict between Toussaint and Napoleon not only hastened the destruction of the emperor; it was a determining factor in making possible for Thomas Jefferson and Robert Livingstone the Louisiana Purchase. America therefore owes to this black chieftain the ending of all Napoleon's dreams of empire in the western hemisphere. But for him we might now be reading a very different American history; and the problems left unsolved by him still amaze and blight the world.

This story is to help fill a long-continuing void. The Negro youth of the world has been taught that the black race has no great traditions, no characters of world importance, no record

of substantial contribution to civilization. The withering moral and social effects of this teaching can hardly be computed. The creative literature now building up with such bright promise in Negro America must correct and counter-balance this falsehood of centuries. A worthy literature reared upon authentic records of achievement is the present spiritual need of the race.

The white world needs no less the same corrective. Western civilization has been made possible largely by black labor. The beneficiaries of that labor were committed for centuries to that iniquitous institution of slavery which not only compelled the suppression of truth about the human nature and the human worth of the slave, but still more disastrously stultified the mind and envenomed the moral quality of the master who had to yield both intelligence and conscience to the fetters of a despotic prejudice. For centuries the Negro had to dream and sing and cover his will to be free by mummery, mystery and buffoonery. He is still the world's accepted scaramouche. Every guise, attitude, or dialect conveying that character has had ample freedom and hospitality. Not so heroic conduct or creative genius. It has thus come about that this white world is still fundamentally unacquainted with the finest quality of its nearest neighbor and benefactor. Nor has that world been able to penetrate the black man's necessary masks. Voodoo, for instance, certainly falls far short of being a high spiritual agency. On the other hand, it was often a clever mystico-political organization operating powerfully upon the minds of illiterate masses. Some of its leaders were more picturesque than Billy Sunday, and abler; and it sometimes rendered valuable public service.

For L'Ouverture himself, as for Joan of Arc or Lincoln, none of the rules will suffice. He is demonstrably an astonishing phenomenon. He comes full-fledged into the thick of great international affairs with amazing freshness of initiative at a time of life when most men's work is done. He is fifty years old. Nothing known of any previous training during the long years of his enslavement can in any way adequately explain the mystery of his personal power over men, his command of language, his mastery of the science and art of war, his skill in statecraft, his deep religious and ethical sensitiveness, or his poised and unfailing humanity. He is not without flaw. He is undoubtedly proud to set himself over against the First Consul as the First of Blacks. He has about him a kind of oriental

elaborateness suggestive of some vanity. He is given to sermonizing, seldom missing a fair opportunity to ascend the pulpit. In spite of a penetrating knowledge of human character, he is often deceived and betrayed by misplaced trust. Nevertheless, the record reveals a consistent and convincing elevation of mind and spirit. For ten years he is a great world influence. He holds magnetically the centre of the stage with two continents looking on. Dialogue, battle scene, council of statesmen, the relief of humor, song or superstition, all revolve about this black man's absorbing personality.

There are endless contradictions in the history of the Haytian revolution, as to both fact and interpretation. Remembering that the business of all art is "to re-arrange experience," I have taken liberties only in the management of situations and the grouping of actual historic characters. I have called together such generals, commissioners and others as the unity and progress of the narrative demand. Once or twice I have set events a little out of their proper order in time. In the first part, for instance, I have Biassou and Boukmant urging Toussaint to join them in a massacre of all the whites of Hayti. Toussaint refuses, and draws them after him to the cause of Spain. As a matter of fact, Toussaint was for a while Biassou's secretary, and Boukmant was actually beheaded before the beginning of L'Ouverture's Spanish period. All accounts agree, however, in revealing Toussaint's swift and incredible mastery and leadership of all the fierce and able men with whom he began and continued his career. I make him leader at once, establish his character, and thence proceed.

Lessing's *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* has often been in my mind. That exposition of Aristotle's description of the function of tragedy as being a purging of the spirit by the incitement of sympathy has seemed to me worthy of remembrance. The awakening of that cathartic sympathy by which we clear our hearts and minds of all prejudice of race or country gives to drama a kind of necessary propagandist quality. He who can sympathize with L'Ouverture in his tragic involvements will, unawares, be sympathizing with the race he represents. If it be said that this Toussaint differs in no fundamental way from any other great captain, the answer is that nothing could be more startling to the modern reader than the story of a Negro functioning magnificently, almost sublimely, as a human being ex-

actly like other human beings of the same exaltation. It is the mission of art to convey those delights and agonies that stir our universal human nature.

Well, then, I send forth this story as I have read it and felt it. *Littera scripta manet*. For encouragement to go on with this difficult history in the snatched intervals of a school master's life, I am grateful to Dr. J. H. Dillard, Mrs. Jeanne Robert Foster, Dr. R. T. Kerlin, and Mrs. Jane Clark Hill. For the loan of very valuable books I am indebted to Mr. Arthur Spingarn; and for literary criticism I am under many obligations to Miss Agnes Repplier.

LESLIE PINCKNEY HILL.  
Cheyney, Pa.



## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Toussaint L'Ouverture.....		Governor of Hayti and Commander-in-Chief of the armies of San Domingo
Christophe	}	.....Generals under Toussaint
Dessalines		
Moise		
Lamartinière		
Paul L'Ouverture		Brother of Toussaint and General
Chany		.....Aide-de-Camp to Toussaint
Francois	}	.....Early leaders of the revolution
Biassou		
Boukmant		
Rigaud	}	.....Mulatto generals for a time under Toussaint
Beauvais		
LaPlume		
Boyer		
Maitland	}	.....English Generals
Harcourt		
Hermona		.....Spanish General
Garcia		.....Spanish Governor
Borgella		.....Mayor of Port-au-Prince
LeClerc		.....Captain-General of the French expedition
Rochambeau	}	.....French Generals under LeClerc
Kerverseau		
Debelle		
Brunet		
Le Brun		.....Aide to LeClerc

Laveaux	}	.....French Agents and Commissioners
Sonthonax		
Hedouville		
Roume		
Vincent		
Michel		
Raymond	}	.....Vice-Admiral of the French fleet
Ferrari		
Suzanne		.....Wife of Toussaint L'Ouverture
Isaac	}	.....Sons of Toussaint L'Ouverture
Placide		
Coisnos	}	French Tutors to Isaac and Placide
Granville		
Mars Plasir		.....Servant of Toussaint L'Ouverture
Pauline		.....Wife of LeClerc
Marie		.....Singing and dancing girl
Jacques		.....A guitar boy
Halaou	}	Leaders of superstitious cults known as voodoo
Romaine		
Tomberel		.....A bad man of national ill-fame, A bishop, blacks, whites, mulattoes, voodoo people, planters, citizens, soldiers, priest, butler, old man, old woman.





# Toussaint L'Ouverture

A DRAMATIC HISTORY

PART THE FIRST

*Representing the spirit of the period 1791-1793.*

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## HAYTI

SCENE I—Plantation quarters near the Cape. *Old Negro man and woman discovered sitting under a shanty porch. Enter Jacques, guitar boy, with Marie, daughter of the old couple.*

MARIE: I am more afraid than I can tell you. There is so much talking. I feel that very terrible things are going to happen.

JACQUES: O yes, I've heard all that, but, for my part, I choose the wing dance. (*He knocks off a step or two.*) And I choose singing with this old box the song of the Blue-tail Fly (*sings*).

I've sung about the long tail blue,  
But always there is something new,  
So for my lady's pleasure I  
Will sing about the blue-tail fly.

A time ago I had to wait  
On master's table, hand the plate,  
Pour out his wine when he was dry,  
And brush away the blue-tail fly,

Did you hear that bass? Listen. Do you like that chord?

MARIE: That's a horrid slave song, but the way you play it

makes my feet go in spite of my disliking. I wish I could play and sing away trouble.

JACQUES: You'll learn.

MARIE: Not when I'm thinking about the cords tied around people's necks.

JACQUES: O the cords around a man's neck are nothing in comparison with the chords I tease out of this box. Terrible things will happen—stripes, heart-break, groaning, cursing, praying—but we will dance and sing.

Once when we drove about the farm  
The blue-tails came in such a swarm  
One bit old Hanky on the thigh:  
Alack, alas, that blue-tail fly!

O how that nag did buck and pitch!  
She tumbled master in the ditch.  
Old master died; folks wondered why;  
The jury said—the blue-tail fly.

MARIE: You mix up everything. You never dance when people die.

JACQUES: The whole world is mixed up.

OLD MAN: Let him alone, daughter. The song is true enough. There's many a grand man destroyed by a little thing. 'Tis all in the Scriptures. I don't read, but I listen. There's a time to dance. I could dance once, but that time is gone. But I can see now more than there is in the world, and I know what's coming. A great wind's coming to blow up life again. I'm a dry bone now, but I shall live again. There's a city coming down from the heavens, after the fiery beasts and the vials of the wrath of God. Blood will run over the earth, but you stay from the sword, my boy. Singing is better.

JACQUES: No sword for me. I think I am a poet. I will heal wounds and mend broken spirits with words and sounds.

MARIE: O Jacques!

*(She goes off, following Jacques who leads the way playing and teasing. Enter Biassou and Boukmant, two stern black men.)*

BIASSOU: Here's where we settle things to-night. We are

to wait here for Toussaint. He is riding from the Spanish border.

OLD MAN: You're welcome. Toussaint will come if he promised. There never was his like for keeping his word. I know what you will talk about—blood, blood. But you listen to Toussaint. Some forty years I've known him. He has a prophet's head, and God is in his heart. (*Old man shambles in feebly, shaking his head.*)

BIASSOU: All along this coast, and up in these mountains, there are thousands of slaves like this old wretch—no mind, no blood, no courage in them—donkeys, body and soul.

BOUKMANT: The sight of them is sickening. Dogs and pigs have more spirit. They are worms. They like to be spit on.

BIASSOU: But worms can turn, and we must rouse them.

BOUKMANT:

Rouse them, and they go straight to sleep again.  
 There's nothing to be hoped until we change  
 The nature of the race. They are too tame,  
 Too kind, too quick-forgiving, credulous  
 Beyond relief. They bear the slaver's lash  
 Like dogs; oppression grinds them in the dust;  
 Still they sleep soundly, laugh and sing and pray.  
 Ah me, the donkey cannot be the tiger!

BIASSOU:

Have patience, man, a little yet, for nature  
 Can be clean warped away from her design.  
 The thing she seems to be in course of making  
 Can suddenly be wrought to something else.  
 I've seen the yelping cur, so kicked and starved  
 He had not spirit left to vent a whine,  
 All suddenly grow mad and sink his teeth  
 Most viciously into the proudest flesh.  
 I've seen the fairest woman, nature's norm  
 Of charm and grace and winsome gentleness,  
 Changed to a wild virago, mouthing oaths  
 That well might stir the scruples of a sailor.  
 I have seen peaceful men that plied the hoe  
 In willing sweat all day for bed and board,  
 Kindly and humble, shake their meekness off  
 Under the stinging whips of human wrong,

Their eyes aflame with rage, their hands stretched forth  
For vengeance, and their breasts athirst for blood.

BOUKMANT:

All this is nature in rare instances;  
But 'tis another story when you come  
To rouse a race, to call a nation up  
To valiance, to infuse a land of slaves  
With self-reliance.

BIASSOU:

But it can be done  
And we are here to do it. You yourself  
Have moved a multitude, and I have drawn  
Time and again the rabble after me  
With reeking pikes and direful torches raised.

BOUKMANT:

But where's the man, now that our bold attempts  
Have failed, and we are deeper down in grief  
Than ever we were lifted when our hopes  
Were seconded by sword and faggot? Where  
In all this isle is one enduring man  
So fruitful of invention that his thought  
And mood can step with all our grievances  
And never be dismayed?

BIASSOU:

The man will come.

BOUKMANT:

That is an easy generality,  
And may be true or not. I only know  
That we ourselves, by sword and fire and blood,  
Must blaze a way to freedom.

BIASSOU:

And we will,  
For many eyes are open that were blind.  
You know we were content until we stole  
The letters of the alphabet. To read  
Is ever to be made dissatisfied.  
So was it when I searched the moving tale  
Of this our tragic island. There I found  
Columbus first, with black men in his train,  
Ravished to see her like a jewelled princess  
Of all the rich Antilles, reverently  
Pronouncing her without a peer on earth.  
For two long centuries the Spaniards swarmed  
Upon her treasure stores, driving to death



The kindly aborigines, their ships  
 Forever teeming with supplanting blacks  
 Raped out of Africa, that murderous Cortez  
 Remaining still their super-man in crime.  
 Another hundred years, and France had gained  
 A footing, her bold Gallic buccaneers  
 Swarming to rob and kill round Tortuga,  
 Protected by that pompous Louis d'Or  
 Who proudly shared with them the guilty spoil.  
 These Frenchmen, too, covered the land with slaves  
 To nurse their ease and glut a vaunting greed,  
 And we are in their harpy clutches still.

BOUKMANT:

Yes, there's a tale to stir a sluggard's blood.  
 'Tis with this France my thought begins and ends.  
 'Twas that unrighteous, gaudy Grand Monarque  
 Who decked his lavish palace at Versailles  
 With horrid luxury—parks, fountains, terraces,  
 Wide corridors, salons, and crystal mirrors,  
 Sculpture in alabaster, faience, laces,  
 Carved gilded wood, vast paintings everywhere—  
 Then bred a race of useless gentlemen  
 In silks and wigs, with slipper heels so high  
 That golden, jeweled canes must steady them.  
 And these went mincing after orchestras  
 To gorgeous banquets or to dainty dances,  
 Sweet painted ladies hanging on their arms,  
 Their powdered coiffures towering, and so cumbered  
 With flowing satin that they had to build  
 Around their bodies trellised wire supports.  
 And when against this great debauch I read  
 How my own brothers bled and died like sheep,  
 And when I learned that Louis' splendor drew  
 Assurance from the death-sweat of my race,  
 The slave soul died in me, and I became  
 Another man.

BIASSOU:                    We know the story now,  
 And what to do. This very France herself  
 Has taught us. Her own citizens have vowed  
 To break up all this conscienceless parade,  
 And have no more of kings.

BOUKMANT: Ah, Biassou,  
 I weary of this talk; our soaring words  
 Fly nowhere near the mark.  
*(Enter Toussaint and Francois in the uniform of Spanish  
 generals.)*

But here's a man  
 Whose word and deed are one. Welcome, Toussaint!  
 BIASSOU: 'Tis good to see you both.

FRANCOIS: Thanks, gentlemen.

TOUSSAINT:  
 Pardon my coming here a little late.  
 We've sped a long way riding, and 'tis well  
 I know how best to bind a straining limb,  
 And what a breathing spell means to a mare,  
 Or haply I had not arrived at all.

BOUKMANT: You need no pardon.

TOUSSAINT: Well, you know I think  
 It is the little scruple marks the man.  
 But truly now the night grows on; daybreak  
 Must find us safe within our camp again.  
 And that is far to ride. May we begin?

BOUKMANT:  
 That is my mind, for we are here to reach  
 Conclusions on a toss of life or death.  
 Hear, then, Toussaint, with patience what we two,  
 Biassou and myself, come to advise,  
 And answer with your counsel yea or nay.

TOUSSAINT:  
 I came with Jean Francois at your request.

BOUKMANT:  
 This island home of ours is one wide wrack;  
 The whip and disaffection, blood and crime,  
 Are all we know. Four hundred thousand blacks,  
 By birth and labor the sole rightful heirs  
 To this rich soil, must swallow the contempt  
 Of less than two score thousand whites, allied  
 At tricky times with a base equal breed  
 Of mongrel bastards neither black nor white.  
 They all together are the merest handful  
 To our great masses; yet these pale gad-flies



TOUSSAINT: I think I know  
The only way of hope.

BIASSOU: What have we not  
Essayed that reason might command? What mild,  
Submissive necks have we not all along  
Bent willingly to the oppressor's yoke!  
Have you forgotten all our history?

TOUSSAINT:  
'Tis that same history that guides my thought  
To strong conclusions opposite to yours.

BOUKMANT:  
My mind is misty yet. I cannot see  
What warrant in experience you claim.  
When from volcanic France, like sweet evangels,  
Burst forth that new world-slogan, "*Liberté,  
Egalité, Fraternité,*" these whites  
Sprang to the echoing war cry, marched and sang,  
And sped their ardent deputies to France  
To tell the National Assembly there  
That Hayti with one general accord  
Embraced the revolution. True it is,  
They never spoke one word of slavery  
In all their overtures; but we, poor fools,  
Thought to ourselves, "They cannot leave us out."  
'Twas then LeComb, first spokesman of our cause,  
Approached the bourgeois planters to entreat  
For his mulatto class the rights of man.  
They hanged him straight for damned impertinence.  
Then Baudieres went to them; he was torn  
In pieces by a mob. Reason had failed.  
The whole mulatto population then  
Flocked to the standard Vincent Ogé raised  
In hot rebellion: he lacked discipline  
And soon was overwhelmed. Ogé himself  
And his fond brother in the public square  
Were broken on the wheel.

BIASSOU: We now could see  
But one way to deliverance: we left  
Reason and hope and silly Christian trust  
To fools and dotards, went out secretly  
By night and under cover of rain and cloud,

To hut and barn and through the teeming fields,  
 To highway ditchers, to the mason's wall,  
 To many a kitchen door, to mill and shop—  
 Wherever Negroes sweated at their toil  
 We sped the whispered word—“*Death to the whites.*”  
 O God, I never shall forget the sights!  
 Dull, empty-headed idiots often stood  
 Breathless with open mouths and eyes aglare  
 For wonder at our meaning; but they all  
 Did comprehend at last. The faggot flamed;  
 We cut the slavers down and burned their homes;  
 The heavens were black with smoke, earth reeked with  
 blood;

Four hundred thousand blacks became a scourge  
 Of devils, and the white men sued for peace.

TOUSSAINT:

And still you failed.

BOUKMANT:

We failed because we let  
 A man of them survive. The slavers came  
 Frightened and fawning with fair promises  
 Of equal rights with them, and we, sad dupes,  
 Fell for the snare. We quenched the firebrand, sheathed  
 The dripping sword, all trustful in the evening,  
 Only to find when morning brought the light  
 The self-same hands still tightened on our throats.  
 We let the white man live, and we are lost.

FRANCOIS:

If I must pray you, Boukmant, now to leave  
 This history, it is because the time,  
 Long pregnant with the burden of these tales,  
 Creeps from us. Will you now let Toussaint speak?

BOUKMANT:

We came for that.

BIASSOU:

We'll hear him.

TOUSSAINT:

My good friends,  
 I came into this world I know not how,  
 But found myself a dreaming lathe-like lad  
 Quick with a sense of something in my mind  
 And something in my heart that from the first  
 Called me to inward questioning. I loved  
 The swarded earth and the benignant skies;

I made acquaintance soon with flower and herb  
 And searched to find their healing properties.  
 I stood where the strong wind swept from the sea  
 To cool our mountain tops and bring us rain,  
 Bathing my body in the cleansing wash.  
 The vast mute order of the teeming globe  
 Was curious to me, and I made friends  
 With dog and cattle and the noble horse,  
 While still I pondered on the ways of man—  
 His proud dominion over land and sea,  
 His will forever reaching farther out  
 For conquest, his creative puissance,  
 His sense of beauty, and his moral law.  
 Throughout the universe I came to trace  
 A unity that bound all living things  
 In one co-ordinated whole; and man,  
 It seemed to me, had but one proper task,  
 To learn the good and beauty of the world  
 And labor with his brother to increase  
 The benefit and happiness of all.  
 And from that strong conviction I was raised  
 By God to know my calling. It is this:  
 To set my people free and make that world  
 Where black men live a safe and sure retreat  
 For all the friends of freedom everywhere.  
 It is not, then, to make one race supreme  
 That we must fight, but to make all men free.  
 Whatever government gives hope of this  
 Has my allegiance. Now the Spanish king  
 Stands up for peace and law and liberty  
 Against the rank apostasy of France.  
 Therefore I serve that king, and you, good friends,  
 Must join me with your masses until France  
 Comes back to reason. We will sweep the isle  
 In freedom's name, no shadow of a doubt  
 Between the great objective and ourselves.  
 Tell me in candor, will you follow me?

**BOUKMANT:**

Whatever our misgivings, we have come  
 Prepared to follow you!

**TOUSSAINT:**

For this relief

From my long deep concern about your course  
I take your hand in brotherhood and trust.  
And yours, Biassou.

BIASSOU: You may count on me.

*(Enter Jacques, making motions towards Francois with his guitar.)*

FRANCOIS: Here is a lad who seems to crave a word.

TOUSSAINT: What is it, boy?

*(A cock crows in the distance.)*

JACQUES: You charged me when you passed, Sir, to feed your horses and rub their legs, and to make some motion here as soon as I should hear any cock crowing up day-break.

TOUSSAINT: Are the horses fed? And did I hear some cock crowing?

JACQUES: The provender which I heaped before the mares by the tamarind tree has all disappeared, Sir. *(Cock crows again.)* And there's the rooster again.

TOUSSAINT:

Thanks, boy; it is past midnight. Go you now  
And play a slumber tune with your guitar. *(Exit Jacques)*  
Good friends, await my word; our time is gone;  
We must be past the border before dawn.  
*(Exeunt Toussaint and Francois.)*

BOUKMANT:

Now, Biassou, we are resolved. God speed  
Our resolution to the worthy deed.

BIASSOU:

And speed our feet at once o'er hill and plain  
To call our brothers to the cause of Spain. *(Exeunt.)*





## PART THE SECOND

*The spirit of the Period 1794-1798*

SCENE I. Voodoo gathering in hill country near Port-au-Prince. *Enter two old black conjure women leaning on poles and followed by a tattered company. They drive down four stakes marking the corners of a large square. On the left a black boar is tied. Tropical trees and dense shrubbery in the rear.*

OLD WOMAN: (*Touching each stake.*)

East, one; west, one; north, one; south, one.

Gather, gather silently.

Groan and groan and say "Be free."

With your left hand hold your hair;

Raise your right hand in a prayer,

Standing in a perfect square.

One low moan from every mouth,

East and west and north and south.

One low groan with every breath,

Groan for life and groan for death;

Whatever way the wind may be,

Groan and say "Be free."

*(They groan as directed, turning to the four points of the compass. After each groan they all say "Be free." The second old woman walks around the whole group slowly, mysteriously, leaning on her pole, and saluting the boar at each passing.)*

Break the square, and on the ground

Seated in a circle round,

Sway your bodies, groan and sing.

Make the gutted guitar ring.

Sing in groans without a word

Till the devil's blood is stirred

Hot in every hand and foot

And every eye; and I will put  
 A kettle on a smoking flame,  
 And in the devil's evil name  
 Boil four green snakes and four white rats,  
 And four black, mewling tabby cats.  
 Let the smoke and flame inspire  
 With a flood of wild desire  
 Man and maiden to advance  
 Leaping to the voodoo dance.  
 Louder, faster, wail and groan  
 Sway and circle, dance and moan.  
 Whatever way the wind may be,  
 Groan and say "Be free."

*(They execute all these directions, the old woman stirring the kettle with her pole. A man leaps out of the circle. A girl joins him. One by one the rest follow until the whole company is engaged in a mad revelry of abandoned dancing. The second old woman continues her walk around the whole company. They groan the dance tune faster and faster, accompanied by guitars and drums. The old woman at the kettle raises her pole over the whirling dancers. One by one they sink exhausted into the circle. Enter Romaine through trees from the rear.)*

Who are you, Sir?

ROMAINE: I am one who would be free.

OLD WOMAN: What is the word?

ROMAINE: Blood.

OLD WOMAN: Blood is the word. Come into the circle.

MAN: That is Romaine who says the Holy Virgin leads him about.

ROMAINE: I am wedded in my spirit to the Holy Mother. She has a Son whose blood was drained for rebels. She calls me forth to blood again. I follow. She stands beside me now invisible to you. Beware of my word, lest you displease her. I speak her desires. It is her will that rules the world. *(They talk among themselves, some with wondering credulity, others cynically.)*

OLD WOMAN: I know you, Romaine. You will work wonders for us. Blessed be the Virgin! *(She groans tunefully)*

*and many join her.) (Enter Halaou through the trees holding a white rooster close in his arm, and stroking its back carefully.)*

ROMAINE: Hail, good mother! Blood!

OLD WOMAN: Welcome, Halaou. Blood is the word.

ALL: Blood!

OLD WOMAN: Be free!

ALL: Be free!

HALAOU: Well said, and we will vow it. Here I have the sum of all that is white in the world—all the color, all the crowing, all the fine, finical appearance. Listen. Just so long as I keep this bird with me, no harm can come to me or mine from any white mortal on earth. Silly, noisy, strutting cock-a-doodle! When he tries to flutter off, I grasp him—thus. *(He grasps the rooster by the throat. There is a low murmur.)*

OLD WOMAN: Within the circle, Halaou. Time flies.

*(She takes the centre of the group, raising her pole.)*

Silence now, and hearken all.

Now the time is come to call

Earth and heaven, fire and flood

Witness to the oath of blood.

In the bush a boar is tied,

Black and bristled; on each side

Stands a slayer with a knife

Ready for the grunting life.

Beat him with a knotted flail,

Smite the snout and twist the tail,

Break the legs and slit the ears;

When the oozy blood appears,

Two keen pikes will run him through.

Groan and dance with wild ado.

Tear the reeking entrails out,

Parcel every bit about,

Dabble in the gory mud,

Groan, and swear the oath of blood:

Then let all again advance

To revel in the voodoo dance.

*(They execute all this in an orgy of superstitious frenzy. A cry is heard. Enter two black men from rear roughly hustling in a white man.)*

Silence! What have we here?

BLACK MAN: Blood! A white man. We caught him out there sneaking through the bushes. (*Some threaten the white man.*)

OLD WOMAN: Not a hand against him. Not now.

ROMAINE: The Virgin bids me speak. (*Holds up his hands ceremoniously.*) She would not have this white man done for. She would have his face smeared black with the soot of this fire, and his hands soaked red in the blood of this boar. She would have him whipped and set free to tell tales.

OLD WOMAN: So be it. (*They whip him, bedaub him and rudely thrust him out.*)

HALAOU: There's danger here now. One white presence curses all our mysteries. The spirit of this bird informs me that this white man is to be a seed of trouble. We had better disperse, and come again at the call. There's work to do.

ROMAINE: Be careful of my words. Beware the Virgin! She bids us be gone.

OLD WOMAN:

East, west, north, south,  
Silently let all go forth.  
Whatever way the wind may be,  
Spread the word "Be free."

(*Exeunt all but Halaou and Romaine.*)

HALAOU: There's not a fool in all that company that will not strike when the time comes.

ROMAINE: The white man has no knowledge of the power of slaves. He has no understanding of these doings here.

HALAOU: The thing to fear in a man is his weakness.

ROMAINE: Our weakness, Halaou, shall be more than their strength, and our ignorance more than their wisdom. But come now. We will speak of the Virgin and the cock, and whisper the oath of blood and the word of freedom into every black man's ear, until he is athirst for the blood of oppressors. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II. Plantation near Port-au-Prince. *Laveaux, governor-general, and Sonthonax, commissioner, a colonial planter, a dejected white man, Rigaud and Beauvais, mulatto generals, in conference.*

LAVEAUX:

The time and the occasion both are ripe  
For all of us whose lot it is to dwell  
Upon this island, here to temper wrath  
With reasonable counsel, to search out  
The cause of this wide disaffection spread  
From North to South, and by fair conference  
Build up the solid basis of accord.  
I come with this commissioner from France,  
Invested with complete authority  
To find agreement and to bear it through  
To mutual good will and lasting peace.  
First, Santhonax, say what the policy  
And cherished purpose of our mother France  
Would have us here proclaim.

SONTHONAX:

I am a late arrival on this scene  
Of internecine strife. I find that three  
Opposing factions wage a wasting war  
For mastery—the planters by whose toil  
And swift-accumulating wealth these hills  
And vales have blossomed in productiveness,  
The even-tempered government of France,  
Whose careful thought is for the good of all,  
And the revolting black and colored clans.  
We all are here: I come to bear my part,  
In whatsoever brings us to accord.

LAVEAUX:

The interest of France is thus expressed.  
May we now hear the planter's attitude?

PLANTER:

*(Leading forward the dejected white man)*

Your Excellency, I bring with me here  
 A sad, convincing witness to the plight  
 Wherein we stand. Two centuries have passed  
 Since we began our labors to reclaim  
 The wilderness, to build new homes, and link  
 This island to the commerce of the world.  
 Our toil, as you admit, has prospered here;  
 Our wealth by husbandry has multiplied;  
 We stand in our clear right when we contend  
 That what we have by thrift and zeal acquired  
 Is ours to hold in perpetuity.  
 This land is ours: the fruit of it is ours;  
 The slave who cultivates the soil, who came  
 Bought, bound and paid for here to do our will,  
 Is ours, too. We never could have dreamed  
 Of argument with slaves about our rights.  
 Denying impudently these just claims,  
 The blacks are in rebellion, and our lives,  
 By their great masses overwhelmed, are all  
 In jeopardy; we all are liable  
 To massacre and fire and such abuse  
 As this poor man bears in his body: I  
 Am here to swear that we will have redress.

LAVEAUX: What is it you have run into, good man?

MAN: Sir, I was only slipping along the hill behind the city last night where the Negroes have their voodoo orgies, all by myself, very quietly. I intended no trouble. The report of these mysteries has travelled over the world. I was only curious to see for myself. These blacks hate white people, and hold their meetings in secret mountain hollows. I knew I went at my peril, and so I was crawling through the bushes towards the groaning and the drums and the dancing, when two ruffians rushed upon me and dragged me right into the midst of the revels. Two old black women who seemed to have authority, stood between me and death. There were also two fierce black men who appeared to speak on my side with queer talk about a virgin and a rooster. But all agreed that I should be thrashed and smeared with soot and thrust out to tell tales.

LAVEAUX: What tales?

MAN: I suppose, your honor, they hoped I would come here,

or go elsewhere abroad, and make it known that my fate would be but a petting in comparison with the punishment to be visited upon the whole white race. Oh, they were in the midst of terrible doings, Sir.

LAVEAUX:

Go, man, and salve your wounds. I pity you. (*Exit man.*)  
 Now Beauvais and Rigaud, does that poor man  
 Interpret rightly his experience?  
 Have colored men concluded to deny  
 So far those rights the planters have expressed  
 That they go on now to exterminate  
 Their benefactors? Tell us candidly.

BEAUVAIS:

In candor equal with your own, I speak  
 One language; and there is but one clear word  
 That totals up the whole of our design:  
 That word is freedom. I can say no more.

SANTHONAX:

Beauvais is eloquent in brevity.  
 His words are packed together like a charge  
 Of cotton in a gun, the more to heed  
 For that compression which, when once touched off,  
 Brings on terrific action.

LAVEAUX:

He has made  
 His meaning plain; and now I think Rigaud,  
 By right of service to the cause of France,  
 And his pre-eminence in all the South,  
 Where he commands a whole arrondissement,  
 Should speak the last word for his colored race.

RIGAUD:

Without pretense of any kind, my heart,  
 Responds as promptly as the warmest here  
 To every word that speaks the name of peace.  
 I hear but one discordant note to jar  
 The harmony of these proceedings: that,  
 As you must know, is what this planter says  
 To gloss the heinous crime of slavery.  
 We learned the lesson from yourselves; we conned  
 The book of your experience and found  
 No white man held in chains that did not break  
 His bondage soon or late, accounting life

As nothing worth apart from liberty.  
 France first threw off the yoke of tyranny,  
 And north of us, beyond the streaming gulf,  
 A little group of tributary states  
 Led by the genius of one mighty heart,  
 Broke from the death grip of the British crown,  
 And built a nation that has set a mark  
 For every subject people under heaven.  
 From the two hemispheres George Washington  
 Summoned the friends of freedom to his flag.  
 Beauvais and I were of the first that sped  
 From Hayti with eight hundred of our men  
 To join the Count d'Estaing whose valiant band  
 Ploughed through the swamps of Georgia and besieged  
 The city of Savannah. There we learned  
 The art of war, and felt the power of minds  
 Set to a great determination: there  
 One blighting curse alone besmirched the name  
 Of that new nation: 'Twas the Negro slave  
 Tilling the fields, clearing the forest wilds,  
 Casting up highways, nursing pale white babes  
 At full black breasts, cooking the white man's food,  
 Building the white man's house, loading his ships  
 That sail the seven seas, and standing guard  
 Upon the sanctity of womanhood,  
 Singing the while a wondrous sorrow song  
 Of faith and kindly humor, while no voice  
 In all that continent was heard to cry  
 Against the chartered crime. In this poor isle  
 The story is the same; you know it well.  
 We only imitate America,  
 And follow France in hurling tyrants down.  
 These planters here who drove their helpless slaves  
 For centuries in unrewarded toil,  
 Sating their lusts, and piling fortunes up  
 By rape and blood and plunder, should not now  
 Be taken by surprise because, forsooth,  
 White men and women pay the long due price.

LAVEAUX:

You have had grievance General, I grant,  
 And none of us is guiltless; but I fear



Reprisal and recrimination scarce  
 Can check the tide of war, and we are come,  
 Remember, if we may, to curb our spleen  
 And fix our minds upon a remedy.

RIGAUD:

Permit me, then, to say the remedy  
 Already is applied. We all are sworn,  
 Black men and colored men together now,  
 To take by arms the freedom you deny,  
 Or perish in the resolute attempt.

SANTHONAX (*Half cynically, with a sly suggestiveness*):

But you are all divided: in the North  
 The black men are with Spain, while in the South  
 Your colored people battle on alone.

RIGAUD:

At first we were divided. Colored men,  
 Sought for themselves alone enfranchisement,  
 But from the midst of these same trampled blacks  
 God lifted up a valiant man, as great  
 As Washington in character, in power  
 Of leadership and in the arts of war.  
 The name of Francis Dominique Toussaint  
 Hallows the cause of freedom. He is now  
 The light of all our hopes, his swarming host  
 Sweeping the North for Spain while France rejects  
 The principles of justice. True it is  
 That I myself, with such a leading here  
 Throughout the South as you are pleased to hint,  
 Have never turned from France: I have withstood  
 The rich bribes of the English who are now  
 In league with Spain, and who, if once they won  
 This southern terrain, linked with Toussaint's power,  
 Could make short shrift of France. I have denounced  
 These planters who have lured the English here,  
 And led my army out against them both.

LAVEAUX: (*In a reconciling and subduing tone.*)

France never will forget these services,  
 Nor I to lean upon your loyalty.

RIGAUD:

I stand with you, Sir, foolishly perhaps,  
 Unwilling to believe that those who come

To Hayti as commissioners from France  
 To rob us of our rights, do represent  
 The purpose of the French Directory.  
 But though Toussaint serves Spain, while I serve France,  
 We are as one in purpose.

LAVEAUX: (*In a melting tone and manner.*)  
 Gentlemen,

It must not be supposed that such as we,  
 With full authority and leadership,  
 Thus candidly revealing each to each  
 The burden of his mind, could fail to reach  
 Some swift decision for the good of all.  
 Stand we adjourned, until we have reviewed  
 Each separate opinion, and sent forth  
 Official proclamation to make known  
 The unreserved benevolence of France.  
 (*Exeunt planter, Rigaud and Beauvais.*)

SANTHONAX:

The lobster fishermen are wont to say,  
 "Haul not your net up when the tide is high."  
 'Tis plain we ride upon a tempest here,  
 And we are lost unless we pour the oil  
 Of clemency upon the surging brine.  
 In prudence we must set these Negroes free.  
 What say you?

LAVEAUX: Surely, we must play for time  
 To build our fortunes up again and win  
 By strategy a new control for France.  
 You know we have no thought of giving up.  
 'Tis not the white man's manner: we will bend  
 To reap a richer harvest in the end.

SANTHONAX:

'Twere better far to offer of ourselves  
 That suffrage which the rebels mean to take.  
 Meanwhile, there'll be no sleeping of our wits.

LAVEAUX:

Well, then, my brother, go we forth to speed  
 The proclamation that the slave is freed.  
 Come. Vive la France! We stoop a-while to-day  
 To build anew the bulwarks of our sway.  
 (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III. The camp of the Spanish Army in the Spanish Port of San Domingo seven months later. (*Enter Hermona, commander, with an aide.*)

HERMONA:

But seven months of bright success, and now  
You say Toussaint has turned away from us,  
Are you quite certain of this dreadful tale?

AIDE:

I am as certain, Sir, as I am sure  
We talk together here. I know Toussaint,  
With officers and full five thousand men  
Under the Negro's banner, whose command  
They follow with fanatic faith, has turned  
Against the Spanish cause, and even now  
Has doubtless joined the French commissioners.

HERMONA:

Then, truly, Spain is dealt a blow. I learned  
To trust this Negro whose up-rising star  
Lights now the heaven of his people's dream.  
His personal authority is such  
That whatsoever way his mind may lean  
That way the black race follows. Any cause  
With his support may prosper in this isle;  
But nothing thrives against his opposition.  
He is a man who keeps his conscience quick,  
And never breaks his word. I often said  
If ever some good angel came to earth  
To find a habitation in a heart,  
That heart would be Toussaint's.

AIDE:

They tell a tale  
That props your estimation of the man.  
When first the planters faced the black revolt  
They found no quarter; every man of them  
Was marked for swift extinction; bloody chiefs  
Led on the slaves with knife and torch until  
It seemed the last surviving white was doomed.

Toussaint, as strongly moved to freedom's call  
 As any black alive, kept in his breast  
 The only heart of mercy. With his life  
 In constant jeopardy, for thirty days  
 He stood between his master and the sword,  
 Guided him safely to a merchant ship  
 Bound north for Baltimore, stored in her hold  
 Sugar in forty hogsheads to support  
 His exile, and with tears bade him adieu.  
 This master, old Bayou deLibertas,  
 Had long been kind and merciful ; Toussaint  
 Repaid him with heroic gratitude.  
 That debt discharged, he joined the rebel horde,  
 And promptly won and firmly held that power  
 Which we have sought to win.

HERMONA:                                 The story rings  
 True to the man, and for that reason I  
 Can hardly reconcile this late default  
 With what I know of him.

AIDE:   Corruption, Sir,  
 Could never move him ; vascillation flees  
 Before his face. He keeps a single mind  
 For power and the freedom of his race.  
 Whatever makes for these possesses him.  
 The Frenchmen played so long a double game  
 He quit their service, headed up for Spain  
 An army made of men whom none but he  
 Could hammer into soldiers, and with these  
 Took Dondon, Plaisance, L'Acul, Ennery,  
 The parish of Limbé, Gros Morne, and all  
 Between from Marmalade to Gonaives.  
 It was a miracle of stern dispatch,  
 Resourceful intrepidity, and skill  
 No captain of the old world could excel.  
 With such a chain of forts across the north  
 Of Hayti, and his endless diligence,  
 He could have given France into our hands,  
 Or bastioned a kingdom for himself.

HERMONA:  
 What did he lack with us? You will recall  
 That when his lifted banners streamed across

The Spanish border bright with victories,  
 We hailed the conqueror with salvos, made  
 A holiday with festival and song  
 At Saint Miguel, and, while our priests stood by,  
 Did humble reverence to this swarthy chief,  
 And granted him a plenary command.

AIDE:

The Abbé de la Haie, his friend and guide  
 In spiritual counsel, says he lacked  
 The faith that Spain could ever break away  
 From monarchy to that enlarged design  
 Of liberty to which his life is pledged.  
 I hear, besides, that those black generals  
 That share authority with him from Spain,  
 Francois and Biassou, have irked him sore  
 With petty jealousies and rivalries,  
 Seeing the eminence they sought eclipsed  
 By his full glory. These men are no more  
 To stand within his path: he leaves their strife,  
 Believing in his self-sufficiency.

HERMONA:

Do those fierce blacks stand loyally with us?

AIDE:

They do, but both are not the half of him,  
 Whether to counsel, govern men, or fight.  
 (*Enter Messenger.*)

HERMONA: What is your errand?

MESSENGER: Sir, Toussaint desires  
 That you should read this paper, bids me say  
 That on the face of it you may discern  
 Why he has left the Spaniards, and presents  
 His salutations and the gratitude  
 He feels for all your kindness and respect.

HERMONA: (*Reads*) *A Proclamation.* France, ever jealous  
 of the peace and welfare of her colonies, moved by the  
 spirit of amity, and devoted irrevocably to the principles of  
 freedom, desires the happiness and prosperity of all her  
 people without regard to race or station. Viewing with  
 deep concern those struggles for liberty by which the inhab-  
 itants of Hayti have been driven into opposing bloody  
 camps, the mother country, to calm these grave disorders,

proclaims from this day a general emancipation of all the slaves and the full enfranchisement of every citizen.

—*Laveaux.*

Ah, now I see the concert whole and clear.

This is that Gallic cunning of the French.

They reason thus: "The Spaniards hold the East;

The fierce mulattoes harrow up the South;

The English hang along the bloody West;

The blacks are more than terrors in the North;

The planters, too, are in revolt; and France

Has come to be the target for them all.

One man alone, this unabashed Toussaint,

Has in himself the power to allay

The quintuple confusion and to draw

Men of all ranks and races after him.

The freedom of his people and the peace

Of Hayti are the lode-stars of his mind;

So let us bait him now with both of these."

And hence this proclamation.

AIDE: You have found

The key to all.

HERMONA (*To messenger*): Say to your master I  
Have no response to send him. (*To aide*) Take this man  
Safely beyond our camp, and let him go.

(*Exit messenger with aide.*)

Unless the Fates turn backward far and fast

The Spaniard's day within this isle is past.

(*Exit.*)

SCENE IV. Plantation quarters near the Cape. *A placard is nailed to a tree. Jacques, Marie, old man, old woman and a rabble shouting and dancing.*

ALL: Freedom, freedom! L'Ouverture!

SLAVE: 'Tis there on the tree. Freedom!

ANOTHER SLAVE: Who'll read that paper for us?

ANOTHER SLAVE: Here's a smart one can do it. (*Pulling Jacques along.*)

OLD MAN: Children, let me hear it. I never thought I'd hear it this side of the grave. Come round this boy and listen.

JACQUES: What's the use? None of you will know any more when I read it. That paper is stuck up all along the roads, and it says that everybody's free. That's what the shouting's all about.

ALL: Be free! Toussaint's come to keep us free. Toussaint L'Ouverture!

OLD MAN: It's the goodness of God, surely.

MARIE: They say it's the goodness of the commissioners. Is that the way of it, Jacques? They have called back Toussaint, and he's coming with a new name.

JACQUES: Who ever heard of any goodness in any kind of commissioner! Where's any good man or good woman either? No, the true way of it is the way of this song.

MARIE: Jacques, your name ought to be contrary. What's the song for now?

JACQUES: It's a good song for a day like this. It's the very day for a tuneful box.

SLAVE: Let him sing it. We ought to sing something.

ANOTHER SLAVE: We'll help him with it if the song's a good one.

JACQUES: (*Plays and sings.*)

The wind is free and the tide is free  
To move with surge and sound,  
The slimy gliding snake is free;  
'Tis only man that's bound.

Who is the craven, who is the brave,  
Where is the freeman, where is the slave!

The nightingale is free to sing  
The sun is free to shine;  
Man is the one created thing  
In chattel bonds to pine.

Who is the craven, who is the brave,  
Where is the freeman, where is the slave!

ALL (*Singing*): Who is the craven, etc.

SLAVE: There's no slave anywhere, the paper says.

ALL (*Singing*): Who is the craven, etc.

OLD MAN: 'Tis all in the Scriptures. Let 'em sing.

JACQUES: Come, spread the news! Let us sing up the land.

MARIE: Must I go too, Jacques?

JACQUES: Come on, of course.

(*Enter Laveaux and Santhonax.*)

ALL: Who is the craven, etc.

(*Exeunt singing.*)

SONTHONAX:

This island is a motley of extremes.  
But yesterday these Negroes were afire  
With rage against the French commissioners;  
Today the glittering vanguard of Toussaint  
Crosses the Spanish border, heralding  
A reconciliation with our cause.

LAVEAUX:

Our proclamation like a leaven works  
Within the populace. So all these blacks  
Are shouting freedom, giving up the day,  
As you have seen and heard, to dance and song.  
We have ourselves occasion to rejoice  
In this our wise decision, for when once  
Toussaint has pledged his loyalty to France  
Our footing is secure.

SONTHONAX: That loyalty

Gives me supreme concern. Can we be sure  
It is a loyalty to count upon,  
Seeing the shifty nature of the man?

LAVEAUX:



It is the marvel of this black man's deeds  
 That turns much doubting into gratitude.  
 His first achievement is an army wrought  
 Of shabby chattels, many thousands strong,  
 Into a perfect, smoothly-run machine,  
 Controlled by him with iron discipline.  
 Ten regiments spring from his magic hand,  
 Led on by ten black colonels whose wide fame  
 Already fills our ears, and three of whom,  
 Clerveaux, Christophe, and fiery Dessalines,  
 Are second to Toussaint alone in skill.  
 There is, I hear, a splendor and éclat  
 About the man, a rich magnificence  
 True to his lavish oriental blood,  
 A sense of order and of beauty spread.  
 Close to his careful person ninety chiefs  
 Of substance, strength and proven loyalty  
 Keep jealous guard. They are his eyes and ears,  
 The vibrant nerves of his intelligence.  
 On steeds of mettle, elegantly groomed,  
 Their flashing helmets streaming purple plumes  
 In silver dipped, they speed by night and day  
 His lightning orders, or, when parleys come,  
 Stand mounted by with burnished sabres drawn.

SONTHONAX:

There must be in this black some wizardry  
 To work upon your admiration so.

LAVEAUX:

'Tis not that either. Toussaint now has cleansed  
 The disaffected North: no obstacle  
 Has stood against his terrible attack.  
 The treacherous mulattoes he has taught  
 Condign submission; and so great the odds,  
 So strong the opposition he assailed,  
 And such his crushing power to break them down,  
 I gave the man the name of L'Ouverture,  
 Because he made new openings for our hopes.

SONTHONAX:

As L'Ouverture the people know him now;  
 We heard them shouting L'Ouverture ourselves,  
 And he has claimed the title willingly.

It is a sobriquet that takes the mind  
Of all his followers who look to him  
To open all the doors of privilege,  
While he—some day we shall remember this—  
Opens the doors of his ambition wide.

LAVEAUX:

Be that as it will be, we have no choice  
But prudently to match our wits with his.  
He comes for conference to figure out  
The interests of France, and I am bound  
To welcome him with formal dignity  
Befitting his deserts and my estate.  
For this I go to Dondon; head you south;  
Time and events are ripe, and we must on.

*(Exeunt.)*

SCENE V. A woodland roadside near Dondon. *Toussaint, Suzanne, Isaac and Placide, Mars Plasir, and military staff.*

TOUSSAINT:

I find it in my heart almost to bless  
The strain and labor of my absent days,  
So sweet they make the joys of this return  
To wife and children and devoted friends.  
A warrior's life is noble, so they say,  
But nobler far the husbandries of home.

SUZANNE:

There's nothing that a wife can ever say  
In honor of the husband of her heart,  
Hers is a life of simple trust, her pride  
To share the doubts, the fears, the sacrifice  
Of all his days, if only so at home  
He may at length sit down in thankful peace.

TOUSSAINT:

Tell me a little how the boys thrive.

SUZANNE:

They have not failed in diligence at school,  
Or faithful help in keeping our estate  
In shelter, food and comfortable means,  
Or in their father's hope and will for them.

TOUSSAINT:

No general upon the battle field  
Could bring to me report of victories  
More pleasing to my ear. And now, my boys,  
Go with your mother on to Ennery;  
Look to our stock, repair the houses there,  
And let me know how well the coffee blooms  
Upon that fair plantation where our home  
Henceforth shall be, if God shall will it so.  
Mars Plasir, good old friend, will be at hand  
With counsel and experience, and these  
My loyal officers will keep the way  
Safe from the lawless bandits whom this war  
Has spawned upon the land.

ISAAC: Father, I hope  
To render good account of all my trust.

PLACIDE:  
And I to do my best.

MARS PLASIR:  
As for me, Sir, I am the least of servants; yet, Sir,  
I know what faith and honor mean.

*(Exeunt.)*

SCENE VI. Headquarters of Laveaux at Dondon, late in 1794.

*Enter Toussaint, with brilliant staff, aides and attendants in perfect military formation. French officers attending Laveaux with local body guard of Negro soldiers. Citizens and rabble. Cornets sound. Booming of guns.*

VOICES: L'Ouverture! L'Ouverture!

*(Cannon boom.)*

FRENCH OFFICER: Our Governor expects you, honored Sir, and bids me straight conduct you to his room.

*(He conducts Toussaint to Laveaux's private apartment.)*

FIRST CITIZEN: This is a wonderful scene here, if you know it. These two men meet first today. They are to have an understanding about the whole war.

*(Cannon boom.)*

SECOND CITIZEN: Trust my word, the white man who plays the troubled part of governor in that house has no palate for all this shouting of L'Ouverture, and this booming of guns for a Negro.

FIRST CITIZEN: He puts on all this cloak of show, they say, not to be outdone, and to make it appear that all is of his will.

SECOND CITIZEN: 'Tis plain Toussaint knows his powers.

FIRST CITIZEN: The Governor owes his own life to him. When it comes to moving the checker-blocks of this mad war game over the board, we know who will land first in the king row.

SECOND CITIZEN: There is a bold rumor that Toussaint is just a jump or two away. The English have baited him, but he trusts them not. I doubt that he will relish the aping of any king.

FIRST CITIZEN: A man of his ambition can scarcely fathom his own mind.

SECOND CITIZEN: He will surely be in everything important hereafter.

*(Cornets sound.)*

FIRST CITIZEN: There is the signal. Are they out so soon?  
Come aside; we'll hear them.

*(Re-enter Laveaux and Toussaint.)*

LAVEAU:

Soldiers of the republic, citizens,  
Good friends and neighbors all, let us rejoice  
That we are brought together here today  
By a most happy fortune. All too long  
Divided, we have warred in hostile camps.  
When Toussaint stormed across these northern hills  
With that superb success we all admire,  
It was to set his misled people free.  
My privilege it has become to clear  
His mind of apprehension and proclaim  
The general enfranchisement which marks  
This day a holy day. Toussaint returns,  
And all his army after him, to France  
With grateful protestations; and in proof  
Of my official mind and attitude,  
And guided by the gratitude I feel,  
I here pronounce him second in command  
Of San Domingo's army and my chief  
Adviser in affairs of state. By name  
I call him Toussaint L'Ouverture because  
Wherever walls have stood he broke them down,  
Wherever bars were found he made a way,  
By skill and daring and inventive thought.

CITIZENS AND RABBLE: L'Ouverture! L'Ouverture!  
TOUSSAINT:

My fellow citizens, kinsmen, and friends,  
Three things a man derives direct from God—  
The tongue he speaks, his country and his race.  
France stands for two of these; wherefore I grieved  
To leave her under those necessities  
Which in the name of freedom I embraced.  
And so my joy is all the greater now  
To be at home again. The Governor,  
Acknowledging the work I did for Spain,  
Proclaims the freedom of my race, and I  
Submit to him the fruit of all my toil—  
The power of my established leadership,

The loyalty of my confiding race,  
The subjugated cities of the North  
My army keen and irresistible—  
Accepting those responsibilities  
Which he bestows upon me; and I pledge  
My troth to France, so long as France is true.

LAVEAUX:

And that will be as long as France is France.  
We enter now upon the threefold task  
Remaining—to perfect some unity  
Of race and color here among ourselves,  
To clear the island of our English foes,  
And beat the waning Spaniard to his knees.  
In these great ventures let us all unite  
As brothers, whether colored, black or white.

ALL: L'Ouverture! L'Ouverture!

*(Cornets sound. Exeunt all in military order.)*

SCENE VII. Three months later. Laveaux's headquarters at the Cape. *Enter Laveaux and Sonthonax. Laveaux with papers.*

LAVEAUX:

Never so swift a change of fortune came  
To a beleaguered nation as this day  
Has brought to France in her dispute with Spain;  
And never could the wisdom of our move  
In reconciling L'Ouverture to France  
Be proved more clearly than by this dispatch,  
Which, like a score of others sent by him,  
Sets forth the man's incomparable worth.

SONTHONAX:

What do those papers say?

LAVEAUX:

From L'Ouverture  
Comes the assurance, couched in ardent terms  
Of loyalty to France, that all his thought  
And all the energy of his command  
Are trained upon the English, whom he means  
To humble or to drive into the sea.  
His larger operations have begun  
Already, with a watchful deep concern  
For Rigaud's brilliant action in the South  
Against the self-same foe. With him at length  
He hopes to form a juncture; though 'tis said  
The hot mulatto chafes a bit to find  
Toussaint his equal in command and more  
Than equal in achievement and in fame.

SONTHONAX:

There's matter in that chafing we shall see.  
What information have you there from Spain?

LAVEAUX:

The best conceivable. Just when our plans  
Were set to have a final reckoning  
With these hidalgos, at whatever cost,  
The Spanish governor speaks for the crown



In these dispatches, called upon their face  
 The treaty of Basel, wherein he is charged  
 To cede to France the whole of his domain  
 Throughout the East, we only to vouchsafe  
 Security of property and life  
 To the inhabitants within our law.  
 When we have calmed the colored men, and cleared  
 The English from our western littoral,  
 We may with leisure and impressive pomp  
 Take due possession of the Spanish realm.

## SONTHONAX:

We are rid of Spain;  
 But greater than a kingdom is a man  
 Moved by a flaming zeal and following  
 A fiery aspiration: such a man  
 Is Toussaint L'Ouverture, and I am not  
 Resolved of doubt as yet, until I know  
 What fate decrees that we must learn from him.  
 If I must speak in plainer terms, I mean  
 I still mistrust the prop on which we lean.

## LAVEAUX:

Mistrust the prop, but let us not mistrust  
 Our wits to do and fathom what we must:  
 Though doubts of Toussaint still be in the way,  
 France gains through him a victory today.

SCENE VIII. Rigaud's camp in the South. *Enter Rigaud and Beauvais, officers and guard.*

BEAUVAIS:

May heaven grant us now the strength we need,  
Unflagging courage, singleness of aim,  
And unity of thought and action till  
We close accounts with England. If I hear  
Correctly, we have all the grounds of hope  
For a successful issue. L'Ouverture  
Now holds the solid North. The Spanish crown  
Surrenders all her claims. What now prevents  
Crushing the shell of English insolence  
As any hinged lever cracks a nut?

RIGAUD:

The answer is that we will do it. Still  
We shall be called upon for stirring work  
And selfless magnanimity. To use  
Your figure of the lever, Toussaint holds  
One arm and I the other, but the hinge  
Is France who still determines what we do.

BEAUVAIS:

Toussaint and you are equal in command,  
He in the North, you in the South. What fear  
Disturbs the quiet of your confidence?

RIGAUD:

The fear of French corruption that may turn  
Our services combined to less than naught.

BEAUVAIS:

But have we not advantages so clear  
The French may be discounted?

RIGAUD:

So it seems

But these appearances are treacherous.

BEAUVAIS:

They know that you have stood against the bribes  
Of all the English schemers and by that  
Revealed your constancy.

RIGAUD:                                   They know it all,  
    And make an outer show of gratitude.

BEAUBAIS:  
    What news comes from the North?

RIGAUD:                                   Each hour I  
    Expect intelligence.  
*(Enter LaPlume.)*                   Here comes LaPlume  
    This very minute, whom I sent to find  
    The way the wind blows. What, Sir, is the word?

LAPLUME:  
    Events are moving swiftly, General,  
    And all revolves about the crescent name  
    Of Toussaint L'Ouverture to illustrate  
    The quality of his accomplishments.  
    He moves perpetually; his energies  
    Increase as his exertions multiply.  
    With little sleep or food by night or day  
    He keeps the saddle, riding east and west  
    With speed incredible, until it seems  
    The man is everywhere at once. Christophe  
    And Dessalines, both men of iron mold,  
    Are driven hard to keep the torrid pace.  
    Where danger is, Toussaint himself is there;  
    He trusts no eye to see, no wit to plan,  
    And suffers no exception to his will.  
    These three have stung the English left and right  
    In close co-ordinated strategy,  
    Repulsed at times, but coming on again,  
    With fresh and resolute resourcefulness,  
    Until at length they hold Mirabalais,  
    Key to the grain and cattle of the East,  
    With certain prospects of Saint Nicholas  
    And Gonaives; by which the English know  
    Their days are done: Maitland their general  
    Has sued for peace on honorable terms.

RIGAUD:  
    How do the French Commissioners construe  
    These bold exploits?

LAPLUME:                               They are but puppets now;  
    Although they still maintain a poor pretense

Of weak authority, which L'Ouverture  
Respects no further than is politic.

RIGAUD:

Are they aware that they are impotent?

LAPLUME:

They must be after one dark episode.  
Villatte, our sharp mulatto friend, who held  
Equal command with yours at Cape Francois,  
Thinking himself upon advantaged ground,  
Concocted surreptitiously a coup,  
Seized Governor Laveaux, imprisoned him  
And then essayed with anarchistic crooks,  
To carve himself a state. Toussaint was there  
As by a lightning flash, and in two hours  
Set Laveaux free; for which deliverance  
The helpless man promoted him to be  
Commander of the army, and besides  
Lieutenant-Governor of all the realm.  
Toussaint in turn requests the governor  
To go at once with Santhonax to France,  
And tell the National Convention there  
The story of his labors and success.  
Laveaux has gone, but Santhonax lags on  
In sham control a little longer; both  
Aware that L'Ouverture will be supreme.

RIGAUD:

The man who grants a favor holds a lien  
Against the man who takes it. L'Ouverture  
Is practically lord of Hayti now.  
Have you from him a word direct for me?

LAPLUME:

Yes, General, he bids me say that soon  
He hopes to meet with you at Port-au-Prince  
Touching arrangements for the common weal.  
The items of the English treaty hold  
His present thought. New agents have arrived  
Succeeding Santhonax and poor Laveaux—  
One Hedouville, residing at the Cape,  
And Roume in San Domingo City, both,  
'Tis thought, with strict instructions to resume  
Complete control of Hayti,

RIGAUD:

Then the flame  
Of war will mount, and we are set for times  
More terrible than any we have known.  
The cauldron brews amain, and we shall see  
What these thick-gathering events will be.

*(Exeunt.)*

SCENE IX. Temporary staff camp near Gonaives. *Toussaint, Moise and soldiers.*

MOISE: From Roume this message comes.

TOUSSAINT: Read it aloud.

MOISE (*Reads*): General: I learn that the English general, Maitland, will be with you for conference at any hour. It may be wise to risk no chance of unfavorable terms and so to apprehend him on the spot. That action is within your power and will meet with my approval.—*Roume.*

TOUSSAINT:

These men come in good faith and they shall be  
Met by a soldier's honor. My reply

I will at once indite; if they approach,

Bid them be comfortable. (*Retires.*)

(*Enter English general, Harcourt, with attendant.*)

HARCOURT: Gentlemen,

We have been granted an appointment here

With L'Ouverture whose strict regard for time

In all engagements brings us to his camp

Precisely at the moment he has set.

MOISE:

The general will presently receive

Your message; we meanwhile are here to guard

Your person and whatever you may bring.

HARCOURT:

We have bold hints of danger here. Toussaint,

Remember, Sir, will stand accountable

If any harm should overtake us here.

MOISE:

These things were best discussed by you with him.

(*Enter Toussaint with two letters.*)

TOUSSAINT:

I pray you, pardon my detaining you.

A letter came, and I had instantly

To write another: read them both; this first.

(*Gives letter to Harcourt.*)

HARCOURT (*Reads silently*):

Dishonor never went to deeper depths.  
Can it be possible that France will stoop  
To perfidy so base!

TOUSSAINT:                         Read this and see;

Read it aloud—these men our witnesses.

HARCOURT (*Reads aloud*): Commissioner: The English come under my word of honor that they shall have every safeguard in the conference proposed between General Maitland and myself. I should count myself a coward, if I took advantage of their unguarded trust.—*L'Ouverture*. You have redeemed the sullied name of France. And stamped the mark of honor on your race.

TOUSSAINT:

And you no doubt have learned whom you may trust.  
What message have you brought from Maitland here?

HARCOURT:

That he is ready to consider terms.

TOUSSAINT:

I'll meet him here tomorrow at high noon.  
(*Exit Harcourt.*)

MOISE:

That was a desperate and mean device  
Of Roume's, debasing all our noble work.  
He will resent your thwarting his deceit.

TOUSSAINT:

To victories by conscious treachery  
I will prefer defeat: now let us go  
With all our staff to speak with Santhonax.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE X. Next day near the Cape. *Enter Santhonax and Hedouville.*

SANTHONAX:

In truth it now appears the white man's rule  
In Hayti hangs suspended by one thread—  
The slender hope that we may re-assert  
Our own authority and bring this black  
To prompt subordination. He has climbed  
By genius and a vast activity  
To an insufferable pitch of fame.  
His iron will we must contrive to break,  
Or bid adieu to white supremacy.

HEDOUVILLE:

The tropic sun had scarcely shone a week  
To light this revolutionary world  
For me a stranger, but I had observed  
Enough already to be wide awake  
To all our dangers. North and south and west  
The people look to L'Ouverture for help,  
And we are not important in their thought.

SANTHONAX:

I never trusted this commanding black,  
But cannot find the means to break away  
From these strong tentacles of his control,  
Except by indirection and the slights  
I lay upon him covertly at times,  
Or by the flattering honors I confer  
To cozen his support, for I concede  
The man is no unmeritable dupe.

HEDOUVILLE:

Those indirections, slights and flatteries  
Are all transparent wiles to L'Ouverture  
Who reads the veiled disfavor of your face,  
As I perceive, and sets his mind to stall  
Your purpose to reduce his dignities.  
I look for nothing from our talk today



But some fresh humbling of our vain pretense.  
 The man is far too strong, too circumspect,  
 Too loyally supported by Rigaud.  
 We must somehow contrive to force a wedge  
 Between himself and that mulatto chief.  
 A little jealous enmity can work  
 More mischief than a regiment of men;  
 And two ambitions aiming at one goal  
 Can make it so that neither shall arrive.  
 (*Enter Toussaint with Christophe and staff.*)

SANTHONAX:

But here is Toussaint now: Luck speed our cause!  
 My best felicitations, General.

TOUSSAINT:

And mine to you, Commissioners of France.

SANTHONAX:

So swiftly moves the current of events  
 That every moment lays a double tax  
 Upon our thought; whence we have come to know  
 What business seems to you now uppermost.

TOUSSAINT:

In words as plain and prompt as time demands  
 It is that you should leave at once for France,  
 Both for the good of Hayti and yourself.

SANTHONAX:

Has not Laveaux that mission well in hand?  
 He has already gone, leaving to me  
 Administrative burdens yet to bear.  
 Besides, I see no reason for the haste.

TOUSSAINT:

Laveaux has done his duty; you have not.  
 Your governmental tasks will be assumed  
 By Hedouville here present, and by Roume  
 In San Domingo City, who will soon  
 Be called to join him here, if Hedouville  
 Can weather his own conduct long enough;  
 And, lest we waste the day in idle words,  
 Accept my friendly urgency, and go.

SANTHONAX:

Your speech has more than savor of command

Than that polite consideration due  
 To me your lawfully appointed chief.

TOUSSAINT:

I speak the language of necessity—  
 Command, request, or call it what you will.  
 But in respect for your entitlements  
 I'll state the reasons for your taking off.  
 I will pass over all your veiled attempts  
 At weakening the people's confidence  
 In me to whom you owe the last support.  
 I am informed of these but heed them not;  
 For he who strives to work his brother harm  
 Makes havoc of his own integrity,  
 Only to strengthen him he would defeat.  
 More to the point, you have so changed commands  
 By arbitrary rulings, setting up  
 In highest place disfavored officers  
 Who ought to be subordinate, that now  
 My campaigns are embarrassed, and Rigaud  
 Is crossed in orders from yourself and me.  
 You have refused to furnish those supplies  
 Of food and ammunition, which to lack  
 Has been to curb my last offensive thrust  
 Against the English, who, in spite of this,  
 Are brought to terms; and, last of all, 'tis you  
 Whose counsels have so wrought in mutinies  
 And local insurrections that the voice  
 Of all our citizenry seconds mine  
 Enjoining you to go.

SANTHONAX:                      What if I stay?

*(A cannon booms in the distance.)*

TOUSSAINT:

Tell him, Christophe, the meaning of that sound.

CHRISTOPHE:

It means, Sir, that a vessel rides at dawn  
 The eastward-bearing tide with furnished room  
 Befitting a commissioner from France.  
 If he should tarry here beyond that hour,  
 No corner in all Hayti will suffice  
 For his security.

SANTHONAX:                      I will depart,

But you shall know the cost of this affront.

*(Exit flustered and indignant.)*

HEDOUVILLE *(greatly agitated)* :

This may appear high-handedness in you,  
 Leading to misconceptions grave in France,  
 Unless you check them promptly at the spring  
 By making clear to me, now left alone  
 Director of the civil government,  
 The meaning of the measures you pursue.  
 I do not comprehend your reference  
 To conduct I must weather, and I lack  
 All knowledge of the English overtures  
 Now momentarily expected. Wherefore, come  
 A little while aboard the man-of-war  
 Now anchored in the offing, where we two  
 May, in a friendly parley, undisturbed,  
 Consider well the case in which we stand.

TOUSSAINT *(sternly)* :

Your vessel is not large enough to hold  
 A man like me. I tell you, Hedouville,  
 That I am not the man to be deceived  
 By little hypocritic courtesies,  
 When mighty issues hang upon our words.  
 I will not go with you aboard your ship;  
 But we can make this memorable ground  
 By manly interchange of honest truth.

HEDOUVILLE:

Ha! Sir, you strike the grand heroic pose.

TOUSSAINT *(Searchingly)* :

I am informed that you have planted deep  
 The seeds of disaffection in the South,  
 Perceiving in Rigaud, as you presume,  
 Some vanity which you have played upon  
 To lead him on to rivalries with me.  
 We'll speak no more of that, for now you know  
 What conduct you must strive to weather here.  
 As for the English, they today at noon  
 Will come for terms, proposing as I hear  
 Complete surrender to the claims of France.

HEDOUVILLE *(in great anger)* :

Have you so far fed your ambition up

As to forget what treason means? Has pride  
 Or some vain sense of self-sufficiency  
 Robbed you of all perspective in your acts,  
 So that you do not guess the consequence  
 Of insolent effrontery to France?  
 I am as nought in your esteem, and less  
 If England treats with you instead of me.  
 I will not tarry here to face the slight.  
 But you shall hear from me another day.  
*(A cannon booms again in the distance.)*

TOUSSAINT:

Your way, Sir, is your own; I am prepared  
 In truth and honor for whatever comes.  
*(Exit Hedouville hastily, followed slowly by Toussaint  
 who keeps his eyes on Hedouville's retiring figure, and  
 then sits down in a dreamy soliloquy.)*  
 To be a leader! What is that to be?  
 To stand between a people and their foes  
 And earn suspicion for a recompense;  
 To care for men more than they care themselves;  
 To keep a clear discriminating mind  
 Between the better counsel and the best;  
 To be a judge of men, that none may rank  
 In estimation higher than his worth,  
 Nor fail of scope to prove his quality;  
 To search the motive that explains the act  
 Before it is accounted good or bad;  
 To trust a man, and yet not be dismayed  
 To find him faithless, going on again  
 To trust another; to build failure up  
 Into the tedious structure of success;  
 To meet the subtle enemy within  
 As well as him without, and vanquish both;  
 To see the cause betrayed by those who pledge  
 The strictest loyalty; to overmatch  
 The envious with magnanimity;  
 To labor through the day, and through the night  
 To watch and plan and exorcise by prayer  
 The devil troop of doubts that tease the will;  
 To have a body that endures the strain  
 Of labor after labor, each in turn

Demanding more of nerve and hardihood ;  
 To stand before your conscience offering  
 The utmost tithe of mortal sacrifice,  
 While selfish little critic parasites  
 Heckle and plot and spread malignant lies ;  
 To walk through trouble with a heart that drips  
 The blood of agony, yet with a face  
 Of confidence and bright encouragement ;  
 To do and do and die to raise a tribe  
 So robbed and bound and ignorantly weak  
 That God himself conceals their destiny—  
 To be a leader ! God, that is the cost !

*(Enter Suzanne with Isaac and Placide, followed by Mars Plasir, guards, and officers of Toussaint's staff.)*

My confident Suzanne, why do you tempt  
 The dangers of the highway in these times  
 When women may not safely walk abroad ?

SUZANNE: There are so many rumors, good and ill, that I must needs come, like every foolish wife, to know my joy or my distress by the proof of my own eyes and ears. It is all abroad that you will soon have the English in your hands, and the rest of our enemies of all colors and races under your foot. Then I hear the contrary tales of new troubles among our own people and of the displeasure of the French Governor. Mars Plasir and the boys come with me to thank God with you for all His bounty, and to know whatever sorrow faithful hearts may share.

*(Toussaint embraces her tenderly, then likewise each of his sons and Mars Plasir.)*

TOUSSAINT:

You needed not to risk the road for that.  
 The strong creative man who brings to pass  
 The great things of the world is heartened more  
 By the remembrance of a woman's trust  
 Than by the loudest plaudits of the world.  
 And yet you come betimes, for all you hear  
 Of me, both good and evil, is most true.  
 I have achieved some large advantages ;  
 But all across the clear sky of my hopes  
 The clouds of trouble swarm. Always the hour  
 Of danger is the hour of success.

Then must a man by circumspection stanch  
 The little under leaks of confidence.  
 The enemy without, and he within,  
 Yield to me now, but these commissioners  
 Have nothing but mislike for my black face,  
 Whatever outwardly they may profess.  
 Inflamed with jealousy and put to shame  
 By proved incompetence, they will attempt  
 To trammel me with lies, and wrest away  
 The favor of the French Directory.

SUZANNE:

But you will thwart them there as everywhere.

TOUSSAINT:

I must at least endeavor ; to which end  
 I am resolved to send at once to France  
 These boys, Placide and Isaac, who shall be  
 My vital pledge of loyalty to France.  
 There let the great Napoleon observe  
 The pattern of the father in the son,  
 And hold them if he will as hostages.  
 Meanwhile they shall be schooled at Leancourt  
 Or in the famous College de la Marche,  
 In all that may beseem a gentleman,  
 In science, letters and the art of war.

PLACIDE:

I would prefer to labor with you here,  
 If you would find a way to use me so.

ISAAC:

It may be that in France our diligence  
 In study and deportment may break down  
 Those calumnies the enemy has spread.

TOUSSAINT:

I hope it will be so. I trust my boys.

MARS PLASIR:

I pray it may be so, but have my doubts.

TOUSSAINT:

'Tis not for you nor me, good Mars, to know  
 The future but to do our duty now.  
 See to it that Suzanne is safely home,  
 And Isaac and Placide prepared to sail.  
 I have already by a former ship

Dispatched Vincent, a staunch and tried colleague,  
 To give a true account of all my acts,  
 And make a friendly pathway for my sons.  
 So for a time, farewell; each to his task.

*(Suzanne and Toussaint quietly embrace; the boys kiss their father who holds each a little while in his arms, looking tenderly but searchingly into their faces. Toussaint lays a friendly arm around the shoulders of Mars Plaisir, then stands with bared head while his family withdraws.)*

*(Enter Maitland and Harcourt with guards.)*

MAITLAND:

So honorable, just and merciful  
 Has been your conduct in our bitter strife  
 That England speaks with L'Ouverture today  
 Without that loss of dignity and pride  
 Which adds a sting to a confessed defeat.

TOUSSAINT:

In those kind words, you give me cause to hope  
 That still in honor's name England and France  
 With mutual esteem may come to peace.

MAITLAND:

You must observe I speak of L'Ouverture  
 And not of France to whose commissioners  
 I yield in nothing. They have cried you down  
 Because you have dealt gently with our folk,  
 Protecting all your captives, calling back  
 Again to home and peaceful industry  
 Those English emigrés who fled abroad  
 Under your sharp attack; and they have sought  
 By underhand and futile treachery  
 To win you to corruption. I am here  
 To treat with L'Ouverture and not with France  
 To whom you owe as little as myself.

TOUSSAINT:

France has in Hayti representatives  
 Unfaithful to their trust. This I admit;  
 But, General, I am not one of these.  
 What have you to propose?

MAITLAND:

Well, first, my thanks  
 For that humanity of which I speak,

Then frank acknowledgement that England's cause  
 Is lost forever in the Haytian isle,  
 And, last, this proposition: that you seize  
 This opportunity, so richly earned  
 By sacrifice and genius, to build up  
 A kingdom of your own, wherein your race  
 May walk in freedom guided by your hand,  
 And all men in security and faith.

TOUSSAINT:

I cannot treat with you upon these terms.  
 Though easily I now might take the tide  
 Of public favor and become a king,  
 That were a petty self-aggrandizement  
 When I am called to set a nation free;  
 That were to do and be what I abhor.  
 No, General, my object is achieved  
 When Hayti has been cleared of all her foes,  
 And we are left to live our lives in peace.

MAITLAND:

Then I will hear you, Sir.

TOUSSAINT:

Well, I propose  
 That England shall forever quit the isle,  
 Renouncing every claim, my promise given  
 That in all future intercourse her cause  
 Shall ever be considerately heard,  
 Her nationals protected in their rights,  
 Our harbors freely open to her ships  
 For interchange of all commodities,  
 With nothing more exacted in return  
 Than equal treatment and neutrality.  
 Such are the terms of this brief covenant  
 To which as signatories, you and I  
 May honorably now attach our names.

MAITLAND: *(Reads in silence the covenant which Toussaint offers him, walks slowly up and down a moment in thought, then extends his right hand to Toussaint who clasps it cordially. Beneath this signature Maitland affixes his dially. Maitland then returns the document to Toussaint own, and without another word motions to Harcourt that*



*they withdraw. Toussaint remains another moment reading the paper, then hands it to his secretary.)*

*(Enter Tomberel, a bad, black man of national ill-fame, clad in tatters, holding up a club and making gestures in the direction of the retreating figures of Maitland and Harcourt.)*

MOISE (*seeing him first*): Stand where you are; come not another step.

TOUSSAINT (*turning in his direction*): Why are you here? I know you, Tomberel.

TOMBEREL: I am here with two old snivelling, learned hags out there. They are here to warn you against the devil who is the best man of us after all, the only captain worthy of our service. In his name, I ask you, Sir, the privilege of braining those two white sons of sows. I'll finish both, Sir. See!

TOUSSAINT: Lay down that club. Moise, have this mad man bound

Till I consider what to make of him.

*(Moise and soldier take Tomberel out. Enter two old voodoo women who have been standing at a little distance.)*

Who are you, and what would you have of me?

1st OLD WOMAN:

We are sisters whom the Fates  
Choose to be their intimates,  
Blood relations of disaster,  
Whom the nether king, our master,  
Grants the canny power to see  
What the future is to be.

TOUSSAINT: What is your business here?

2nd OLD WOMAN:

For the man of hardihood,  
For the noble and the good,  
Satan ever pours a double  
Portion from the cup of trouble;  
So before old Nick has sent it  
We have hastened to prevent it.

TOUSSAINT: Out with your meaning, or be gone.

1st OLD WOMAN:

L'Ouverture of Hayti, heed  
What we in the future read.

Heaven and earth shall be attendant  
 On that majesty resplendent  
 Which by Satan's will and power  
 Shall be mounting hour by hour.  
 You in honor shall be seated,  
 All your enemies defeated;  
 Peace and glory shall unite  
 In the plaudits of your might;  
 Round the earth a belt of fame  
 Shall be lighted by your name:  
 Then beware, for then the devil  
 Purposes at once to level  
 All these honors in the dust;  
 Wherefore, give us now your trust.

TOUSSAINT: Ha, what trust is this?

2nd OLD WOMAN:

Take this talisman — a skin  
 Of the plantain: here within  
 We have wrapped in fleecy cotton  
 Charms of wonder, rank and rotten —  
 Henbane, hyssop, cactus needles,  
 Seven sorts of sharded beetles,  
 The tail of a lizard, the dung of a goat,  
 A slice of the iguana's throat,  
 Sweat from thirteen quadrupeds  
 And hair from seven human heads.  
 Here confined is all the evil  
 Purposed for you by the devil.  
 If you wear it in a sack  
 Down the middle of your back,  
 Hellish legions may assail you,  
 But good fortune cannot fail you.

TOUSSAINT: (*Takes the little bag which the voodoo woman hands him, holds it off by his fingers at arm's length with a look of scorn, and then hurls it through the air.*)

Go home and find some honest work to do.

You are the degradation of the race.

1st OLD WOMAN: Alas, Sir, you are lost.

TOUSSAINT: And you are damned. Moise, bring me out that horrid Tomberel.

(*Tomberel is brought out between two soldiers*)

Begone, and find some work that suits a man.

TOMBEREL: A true man's work, Sir, a black man's work, is to kill white people.

TOUSSAINT:

If I am told that you have touched a hair  
Of any man unjustly, you shall see  
What manner of man I am.

TOMBEREL: In all prophecy, Sir, your hopes are over. The voodoo women have never failed since Endor's day. These old witches were never born. They always existed. They are wiser than the oldest mysteries. They can talk with Buddha and Jezebel and Annanias. They have scales on their hands from the leprous body of Naaman. They bathe their wrinkled frames in those hot springs that stream under the ocean from the ancient, bloody Delphic caves, and sprinkle themselves with the dust of bones from babies slain by Herod. All the wisdom of the world they carry about with them in two dried fingers which their familiar spirits brought from mummies buried beneath the first Egyptian pyramid, and each has seven devil servants out of hell. The stars fear them. Alas for the man who offends them!

TOUSSAINT: Remember what I said. Moise, let him go.

*(Exit Tomberel.)*

What can these superstitions signify,  
These wild, mad people roaming through the land  
With all their humbugs, tricks and trumperies!

MOISE:

Thousands believe in them, and follow them;  
They are a conjure tribe, said to possess  
A sixth and seventh sense; they often hit  
The truth in clairvoyance and prophecy,  
And have a strange, uncomfortable power  
To trouble honest minds.

TOUSSAINT:

I pity them;  
Yet truly they are symbols, for I think  
There is some meaning in the basest thing.  
Beauty and truth and all of man's success  
Are rooted deep in danger. Have you marked  
The flowering aloes? Tall and sweet and fair,

They rise upon a sturdy stem from leaves  
So tough and thickly matted and so edged  
With sharp serrated spears that he who trips  
In reaching for the bloom may grasp the pricks.

MOISE: These hags perhaps have noticed more than that.

TOUSSAINT:

Perhaps, and yet I hate them. Let us go.  
I must at once from San Domingo call  
This new French agent, Roume, give him full scope  
To gather up the shreds of government  
Here at the Cape in place of Hedouville,  
Acquaint him with the complications brewed  
By that weak man, and help him to repair,  
If that is his desire, the damage done;  
And even as you give this summons speed  
I will bestir me to the greater need.  
*(Gives letter to Moise. Exeunt.)*

## PART THE THIRD

*Representing the period 1799-1800*

SCENE 1. The public square at the Cape. *A large tree, called the Tree of Liberty, in the centre. Officers, soldiers, planters, citizens of all classes and colors. All in excited commotion. About January, 1799.*

1st. PLANTER: The air is cool.

2nd. PLANTER: God knows we need some tempering element. What's this I hear about the new man Roume and this meeting?

1st. PLANTER: The rumor is that Hedouville, before he left here, was so wrought up about L'Ouverture's power and influence, and felt so enraged at being forced out of Hayti by a black man, that he sent to Rigaud a long letter in which he poured out all his grievances, set that fiery mongrel free from Toussaint's authority, and called on him to raise in his own behalf the banner of revolt.

2nd. PLANTER: We are here then to hatch out another holocaust.

1st. PLANTER: Quite the contrary. We are here for a love feast. You see it is this way. Roume has been looking on, as it were, in San Domingo City. Toussaint, too canny as yet to declare himself Governor of Hayti, has called him on to French ground to make a pretty window-show of French authority at the Cape, while he, like the meek subordinate, attends to the main business. Roume comes on duly and is assembling all the generals of all colors for the purpose of plastering up the break. You shall therefore, hear the very sweetest words of unity and love.

2nd. PLANTER: Love, the devil! What of Rigaud?

1st. PLANTER: He'll be here, but God knows what's to come.

2nd. PLANTER: Leave God out. A fool can see that there is nothing ahead but the smoke of guns. Who is your man?

1st. PLANTER: The stronger by necessity. We'll wait. So long as these black and colored lunatics slash each other up, we gain. (*Two rough black men jostle by.*)

1st. BLACK: What time's the meeting?

1st. PLANTER: What's that to you? Where're your manners? What have you done with your "Please Sir?"

2nd. BLACK: We please ourselves, as you may please go hang.

1st. PLANTER: Get yourselves off. (*The black men shuffle on.*) These saucy idiots are drunk with the thought of being our equals.

2nd. PLANTER: That's the trouble. I'd like to go after them.

FRENCH OFFICER: Let us not stir up anything, gentlemen.

OLD BLACK WOMAN:

The stir is made,  
The cards are played,  
The dice are thrown.  
Devil and angel each  
Has now his own. (*Exit.*)

1st. PLANTER: There's no end of these mumbling wenches.

MULATTO: We'll know now who's to come forward.

ANOTHER: I've followed Rigaud these many years, but we've no chance as long as Toussaint lives. Mark this — I'll never serve under a black.

MULATTO: He's a wise man who can swallow his own words before they strangle him.

THE OTHER: Tut, man, strangling's a pastime.

(*Blare of trumpets.*)

FRENCH OFFICER: Stand back, clear the square.

(*Enter Roume with a retinue of officers. Seats himself ceremoniously under the Tree of Liberty. Toussaint follows with a staff, Rigaud likewise. All gather up close in a sort of jumbled but restrained hubbub. Roume rises.*)

ROUME:

This tree is called the Tree of Liberty,  
And in the name of liberty I plead  
The cause of France whose minister I am.  
The suckling babe has grown to prankish childhood  
These troublous years since Hayti's wars began —  
Long years of wastage, horror, blood and death.  
The black man and the colored and the white,

Father and son, Spanish and English and French,  
 Have all in pangs of torture paid the price  
 That liberty demanded. Now we stand  
 Upon the threshold of a settled peace,  
 Nay, at the golden portals of a time  
 Of happiness and plenty, if we now  
 With mutual forgiveness and esteem  
 Will strain our powers to complete the work  
 Still to be done before we enter in.

*(The crowd surges to and fro. Roume pauses for quiet.)*

1st. PLANTER: He seems a pretty speaker.

2nd. PLANTER: More than an orator is needed to bring together those two men.

1st. PLANTER: Neither Toussaint nor Rigaud has winked an eye. Their faces are set straight ahead.

VOICES: Toussaint!

OTHER VOICES: Rigaud!

ROUME:

You raise the names of two uncommon men  
 Of whom I came especially to speak.  
 If we have struggled to the very door  
 Of peace and liberty, as I have said,  
 'Tis chiefly through the merits of one man  
 Of such a poised and philosophic mind,  
 So versed in honor, and so practical  
 In all his management of great affairs,  
 That France accords to him supreme command,  
 Of all her arms in Hayti. Citizens,  
 I speak, as all must know, of L'Ouverture.

VOICES: L'Ouverture!

OTHER VOICES: Rigaud!

ROUME:

'Tis well you sound those names again together.  
 For close to all the fortunes of our cause  
 Rigaud has been allied—an able man,  
 Of indefatigable energy,  
 The idol of his soldiers, true to France,  
 And caring naught for any life divorced  
 From that dear freedom which has been our goal.  
 I count upon him next to L'Ouverture

For leadership in all we are to do.  
 To clarify our purpose further still,  
 Compose the lingering discrepancies  
 In our own ranks, and calm the public mind  
 As to our future actions, I have called  
 This general meeting in the city square.  
 Toussaint will lead us on as heretofore,  
 Rigaud will second him, as in the past,  
 Except in certain southern provinces  
 Where Toussaint will be in direct command.  
 We'll even up the ragged fringes left  
 Of strife with England, publish new commands  
 To all our officers, suppress the raids  
 Of mountain snipers, pardon all our foes,  
 And, binding to ourselves the Spanish realm,  
 See Hayti free at last and strong in peace.

RIGAUD (*hotly*):

Peace without honor, freedom all bereft  
 Of justice never yet became a man.  
 If loyal service rendered to the state  
 Has raised me to a separate command  
 Throughout the South, why am I now reduced  
 To this subordinate capacity.  
 Why am I to be held in less esteem  
 Than one with whom I stand on equal terms  
 In all the labors, all the sacrifice  
 We both have borne together? Why should I  
 Sharpen the edge of zeal to win a cause  
 That turns against me, following a star  
 Whose beams are haloed round another's brow?  
 If this be honor, justice, or desert  
 I covet the exact reverse of these.

ROUME:

Brave General, I never would detract  
 The slightest particle from your distinctions,  
 But we must unify and correlate  
 Under a single authorized command  
 Our future enterprises. We must show  
 The liberal mind, and view as trivial  
 Our intimate and personal reserves,  
 That so the cause may prosper. L'Ouverture,



By all the rights of merit, is our chief,  
You ranking next to him.

TOUSSAINT (*stepping forward*):

I had not thought  
To speak, I came to listen; but you stress  
The great responsibilities I bear,  
And I must pray your Excellency's leave  
To say that Rigaud stands within his rights,  
So long as he can show that Hedouville,  
Our late commissioner, has granted him  
By legal writ full independency  
Of my control, and even urged on him  
Rebellion as a duty to the state.  
These things I know, and I know Rigaud well—  
Keen for his merits, brave, ambitious, tried  
In all the strange vicissitudes of war,  
A man to reckon with as friend or foe —  
And I rejoice to add we owe to him  
A moiety of all we have achieved.  
If he and I are now to pull apart,  
How shall we come to freedom or to peace.

ROUME:

Answering your expressed concern as frankly  
As you have stated it, I here pronounce  
All former orders henceforth null and void.  
Today we herald the supreme command  
Of L'Ouverture: Rigaud will carry out,  
I have no doubt, these new requirements,  
Surrendering those southern provinces  
Named in the new decrees which I will speed  
To every army unit in the isle.

RIGAUD:

Then I beseech your honor to accept  
My resignation. I will go to France,  
Present my cause to the Directory,  
And there demand the justice I am due.

ROUME:

This is no time for resignations, man;  
We do not even entertain the thought.  
You still control a wide arrondissement,  
You still have power, leadership, acclaim,

The prestige of achievement, and the trust  
Unqualified of your commissioner.  
My aim, as representative of France,  
Is solely to perfect and harmonize  
The action of our arms. Now let us hence,  
All striving for the waiting recompense.

*(Rises, and motions for the breaking up of the meeting. The crowd slowly disperses, the officers and soldiers moving off in strict form, Toussaint left, Rigaud right, without exchanging words or signs of recognition.)*

- 1st. PLANTER: If we've seen or heard anything here today that smacks of peace, I'd like to look in on some of those occasions where men are said to plot war.
- 2nd. PLANTER: Did you notice how the sun shone hotter and hotter and drank up the cool breeze we felt at first  
*(Exeunt)*

SCENE II. Jacmel in the South. *Toussaint is seen on the walls of the besieged city completing a letter written on his knees. By him stands a messenger, Dessalines, Christophe and other officers. Some view the distance with field glasses. Commotion. The sound of cannon. The cries of people below the wall. Toussaint is very calm.*

TOUSSAINT (*To messenger*):

Take this to Roume, using those secret paths  
Along the right of the Artibonite  
Which you know well. You'll find him at the Cape.  
(*To Dessalines and Christophe*)

That letter puts a period to Roume,  
As we shall make an end of Rigaud here.

DESSALINES: This Roume is like all Frenchmen.

TOUSSAINT: No, we'll draw

A careful line between the good and bad  
In every race. If seven times seventy  
Offenders light upon these fated shores,  
They shall be separately reckoned with.  
One Phocion, one Asoka, one John Pym  
May justify a nation. So this Roume,  
A prince of double-dealers, is not France.

DESSALINES: Still, 'tis as if he were.

TOUSSAINT: Truly, his guilt

Is manifold. No sooner had we left  
That conference of touching amity,  
Than Rigaud, hastening south, gave up but two  
Of all the strongholds ordered to my charge—  
The Petit Goave and the Grand Goave.  
This was a sorry feint, a mock pretense  
Of disciplined obedience, for straight  
He turned upon his heels and raised the flag  
Of civil war. Roume, knowing this, refused  
My sharp demand that Rigaud be outlawed.  
Without his aid we beat him back and now  
Stand on the walls of Jacmel, hemming in

By land and sea the traitor's last retreat.  
 But this was not enough. Old Jean Francois  
 And Biassou, dyed deeper still in sin  
 Against our cause, are active in the East,  
 Corraling slaves for England. I pronounced it  
 Red treason, calling Roume to back us up  
 By taking over all that Spanish realm  
 Immediately for men and for supplies,  
 As is our right by treaty; but this fox  
 Demurred, and piled a Pelion of affront  
 Upon an Ossa of disloyalty,  
 By sending ships that should be ploughing up  
 To storm the southern shores of Jacmel now,  
 To raid the English, whom he says I love,  
 Off in Jamaica.

DESSALINES:

All along this breach  
 Between the black and colored clans has been  
 Roume's pet premeditation, hope and plan.

TOUSSAINT:

We'll have no more of him. How goes this town,  
 And what is Rigaud's strength, and where is he?

CHRISTOPHE:

The countryside some twenty miles around  
 Mulatto, black and white, has followed him,  
 Some out of loyalty, more out of fear  
 Having no other leader. Not one plough  
 Moves in a field, and not a single wheel  
 Turns in a mill. The city is so crammed  
 With rural bumpkins, women, children, thieves,  
 Licentiatees and ragged fighting men  
 All clamoring for food, they die like flies,  
 Accounting him a lucky man indeed  
 Who chances on a lizard or a rat.

TOUSSAINT: Where is Rigaud?

*(A cannon sounds. Voices, wailing and groaning below the wall.)*

DESSALINES:

He has not shown his face in Jacmel yet,  
 But keeps well towards the West near Cayes; 'tis said  
 He drinks and raves in fits of violence,

Directing others in the action here.

TOUSSAINT:

A brave, strong man, gone wrong! You, Dessalines,  
Press westward after him; Christophe, go east,  
And stop all passage from the Spanish side;  
And I will hold myself this central wall.

*(Exeunt Dessalines and Christophe. Toussaint with one hand behind him remains calmly viewing the city through a telescope.)*

SCENE III. A roadway west of Jacmel. *Rigaud and Beauvais under a tropical tree.*

RIGAUD:

We have wrought wonders, Beauvais, you and I,  
But here's an enterprise to stall our wits—  
This breaking out of Jacmel. Hedged around  
By Toussaint's iron band, what hope have we?

BEAUVAIS:

There is but one last hope. If you in person  
Enter the city now and take the lead  
With your accustomed confidence and zeal,  
Our darkened fortunes may be brightened still.

RIGAUD:

You know, Beauvais, I never shirked a danger,  
But neither you nor any man of mine  
Shall see your general humbled by a black.  
If you and Petion, Gauthier and Birot  
Cannot hold Jacmel, then the jig is up.

BEAUVAIS: Without you, all is lost.

*(Enter messenger.)*

RIGAUD:

What is your news?

MESSENGER:

Our case is deperate, Sir. The city reeks  
With dead and rotting bodies. Famine slays  
As many as the hot besieging guns  
Which Toussaint's rabble drags along the hills  
Above the northern walls where he commands  
In person. We are shut in from the sea,  
And east and west Christophe and Dessalines  
Are crushing in the faint resistance left.

RIGAUD: Where's Birot?

MESSENGER:

He has done heroic deeds  
Right in the thick of all that misery,  
But, seeing swift destruction hovering,  
Flew off towards Cayes. Brave Gauthier came in then  
To his abandoned post, but had no hope.

BEAUVAIS :

There's hope, I say, if you will ride at once  
Merely to let them see that countenance  
Whereon your comrades never read defeat.

RIGAUD: You say, boy, that Toussaint commands in person?

MESSENGER: He does, Sir.

RIGAUD: Beauvais, I will go with you.

*(Sound of guns in the distance. Another messenger rushes in.)*

MESSENGER:

Your person, General Rigaud, is not safe  
In any part of this surrendered southland.  
Gauthier has fallen. Petion with three ships  
Stole through the southern blockade, recklessly  
Tore through the city like a super-man,  
Trampling the dead and for a while led on  
The most forlorn and battle-battered band  
The world has seen. He never had a chance,  
And will have wondrous wit if he can crawl  
Somewhere to safety.

RIGAUD:

Beauvais, we'll not go.  
Here let us rather take a draft of wine  
In mockery of this uncanny black  
Whose humbling we will study. Speed the word  
That I am Rigaud still. We fly today  
But tell all Hayti we'll return to stay.  
*(Exeunt. Sound of cannon afar off. Light of fires from the city.)*

SCENE IV. The walls of Jacmel again. *Toussaint surrounded by men of all races, officers, and a motley band of soldiers. A mulatto citizen climbs from the farther side of the wall holding up a white flag.*

CITIZEN:

The magistrate of Jacmel sends to beg  
Your mercy on the city. All is lost.  
Rigaud and all his captains are in flight,  
Leaving a piteous scene of human woe,  
Wounded and sick and dying. They that breathe  
A little yet perish for want of food,  
And all our homes are burned or sacked or shamed.

TOUSSAINT:

Go back and say that I forgive them all.  
Let them begin to build again at once  
Whatever is destroyed, houses and farms,  
Churches and schools. They shall have ample means.  
I am your father, your commanding chief.  
I welcome all beneath the flag of France  
With open heart. Rigaud himself may come,  
With nothing asked but future loyalty.  
Bear back this message. (*Exit citizen.*)

Now brave Dessalines,  
And my Christophe, put out those hellish fires;  
Establish well your guards; send in your train  
Of wagons with provisions; punish well  
Those ghouls that rob the dead and ravish women,  
And hurry on to join me at the Cape. (*Exeunt*)

SCENE V. A forest of tropical luxuriance on a hill above the Artibonite whose winding waters can be seen below in the distance. *Romaine and Halaou meet. Wandering groups of maroons, camping on this hill to escape the uncertain issues of the war, are seen in the background dimly moving about.*

ROMAINE: Which way are you going with all those virtues and valors and vices of the white race under your arm?



HALAOU: And which way are you spreading the blessed messages of the Virgin?

ROMAINE: I am going neither north nor south, but will hold myself aloof from all races and cities and war camps and the wrangles of great captains. I will choose the wilderness like John of old. My business has been the damning of all whites and the chastening of this dull cock, but truly I am inspired now to damn the world. I led off five hundred stupid dotards swearing the oath of blood, and they all drew every man his blood of a white, but they all every man also shed his blood under some white man's stroke, or maybe at his brother's hand. All this blood was in one battle stream and no man could tell which was whose. All red. This white fowl is out of vogue. He suits not these gory times. The sights I've seen have almost converted me.

HALAOU: I'm up from Jeremie. Didn't I see thirty of my own secret friends in the oath caught there by Rigaud's men, stuck into a hole and starved? And didn't a band of blacks come along for vengeance ripping open the bowels of twice as many mulattoes and whites and laying them out before the city gate to terrify the people? And the women I've seen undone! White and black and every shade between! The Holy Mother had no power to protect virginity. If you are to carry a cock, get a mongrel of all bloods to show forth the mixed corruption of the age.

ROMAINE: And keep you at your elbow henceforth some meretricious spirit. She'll suit better too. But what are we to do with all these wretches whom we lead by signs and voices and wonders, and where are we going now?

HALAOU: We'll sprawl in the forest and await the passing of the black king down to San Domingo from the Cape. Remember, we have played a witty part in all this war, but the world knoweth it not. History will never reveal it.

ROMAINE: Very well, we'll wait. If we are going nowhere, we'll go together.

*(They sit down on the ground under the tropical trees, dim shadowy movements of mysterious figures behind them.)*

SCENE VI. The Cape. *Roume with his staff. Toussaint with Moise, Agé and guard.*

ROUME:

You know the reason now why I must judge  
The time not ripe to grant what you demand.  
Rigaud has fled, but still a smouldering fire  
Of hatred and rebellion haunts the South.  
Before we can completely stop the war,  
Drive slavers out of Hayti, settle down  
In San Domingo City by our right,  
Or even find provisions, we must have  
From Europe reinforcements.

TOUSSAINT: I must stop  
Those weazel words. No man was ever yet  
Your equal for duplicity of speech.  
You say the opposite of what you mean.

ROUME (*hotly*):  
I will not tolerate this insolence  
In a subordinate.

TOUSSAINT (*calmly*): What can you do  
But swallow your chagrin! If I could hate  
A man, it would be such a man as you.  
But there is something in my Negro heart  
That covers hate with pity. I am grieved  
To find you such a recreant to trust,  
So treasonably weak and culpable.  
You should have outlawed Rigaud and prevented  
The strife that ruined him and weakened me,  
To your advantage. You should have possessed  
The Spanish territory, drawing thence  
The help we needed in the southern war.  
You should have checked those slavers in the East,  
And thus become a man for my respect.  
These were your duties. But what have you done?  
Nothing, and worse than nothing, squandering  
Our precious and inadequate resources

In raids upon Jamaica where your men  
Were hanged like dogs by Englishmen who mocked  
Your utter folly. All we have achieved  
Has been without your aid, in spite of you,  
And now I order you to leave the isle.  
I will send Agé here to take control  
Of San Domingo City until I  
Have opportunity to follow him.

ROUME:

Give me a ship, Sir, but remember well  
Napoleon is out of Egypt now,  
Casting the old Directory aside,  
And in his single person managing  
The destinies of France. You shall henceforth  
Stand charged before no less a man than he.

TOUSSAINT:

Go, tell Napoleon what you have done.  
Napoleon is a man, and so am I;  
Napoleon is a soldier, so am I;  
He is the first of whites, and L'Ouverture  
Is now the first of blacks. Between us two  
The issues of our cause will be resolved.  
And now, until some ship conveys you hence,  
I order you to strict imprisonment.  
Come, Moise; at once to Dondon take him off.  
*(Moise and other officers step up. Roume stands amazed.  
Two of his staff come forward to prevent his apprehension,  
but Roume signifies his submission. He is led off.)*

SCENE VII. A road on the way to San Domingo. *Pilgrims traveling thence. Jacques sits by the side of the road asleep. Near by an old man and woman resting.*

OLD MAN: The way may be long, but we'll live yet to see the city fulfilling the Scriptures.

OLD WOMAN: I pray God we reach that city.

OLD MAN: (*A dreamy, rhapsodical, weirdly cadenced chant.*)

Whoever would o' thought th' praise o' Jesus and th' Master's service in our old bones would o' lengthened out our days to see th' glory o' th' Lord lighten th' world! Ethiopia stretching forth her hands to God and a son of Ethiopia ruling a nation—th' strong winds o' th' Eternal blowing life into dry bones—th' seven vials o' th' wrath o' God all sealed up—th' fiery beasts all chained, and th' devil's roaring through th' world stopped for a thousand years—Ezekiel's wheel rolling through th' clouds in th' middle of a wheel—Jeremiah with no more tears—Joseph pulled up out o' th' pit to shine on th' throne of Pharo—Moses striking th' waters with his rod and th' children of Israel passing over on dry land—Ephriam a-quitting all his vexing o' Jacob—th' frog and th' snake good friends—th' lamb asleep with his head on th' lion's mane—Sampson pulling down th' pillar's o' th' temple o' th' unbelievers—Daniel looking into heaven and paying no attention to th' tigers in his den—th' three Hebrew children walking through th' fiery furnace heated seven times hotter than a furnace ever was heated before—Elijah soaring to th' skies on a chariot o' flames—th' stone which th' builders rejected made th' corner stone of th' temple of Jehovah—th' last made first and th' first made last—th' angels rollin' back th' marble from th' sepulchre on th' great getting-up morning—King Jesus riding back on th' winds and th' clouds to th' arms o' His Father—Gabriel blowing welcome from th' battlements o' Paradise—Lazarus lying on Abraham's bosom—Dives crying in hell for a little drop

of water for to cool his parching tongue—th' prodigal child come home again—th' new Jerusalem slipping down to earth out of heaven through th' twinkling stars—that great army th' revelator saw, a hundred and forty and four thousand coming up out o' great trials and tribulations, washing their robes and making 'em white in th' blood o' th' Lamb—no more sorrow, no more war, no more sea, no more earthquake, no more thunder or lightnin', no more pain, no more death, no more light o' th' sun or th' moon or th' stars—nothing but th' glory o' God in th' Kingdom.

OLD WOMAN: Glory be to th' blessed Mother o' Christ. (*Jacques wakes with a start.*) Come, lead us on a little further, boy.

JACQUES: I've had a dream.

OLD MAN: Dreams come from the world above or the world below. Angels and devils open men's eyes in dreams. What did you dream?

JACQUES: I was alone in the world. Not another soul was left alive. A great hand blotted out the sun. I walked in black darkness among ravenous beasts. They howled and gnashed one another. I felt them coming upon me. Then a fire was belched up from the bowels of the earth. Red flames licked out forked tongues to devour me. I rushed to hide under a great rock, but the rock cried against me. The mountain broke from its base and slid to a boiling sea. I shrieked and woke.

OLD MAN: There was never a dream without a meaning. Jacob dreamed and Joseph and the blessed Mother Mary, and Pilate's wife, and John on Patmos. 'Tis all in th' Scriptures. My old eyes can close and see the darkness and th' beasts, and the fiery mountain. 'Tis the weight o' the sins of the world upon you.

OLD WOMAN: Maybe, son, you are lonely in your heart. There's nothing like a hungry heart for darkening the world.

JACQUES: I'll forget the dream and sing (*Thrums his guitar.*)

What is it that I lack  
To make the morning fair?  
A fleeting glance, a careless toss  
Of glossy raven hair.

And what disturbs the night,  
Though stars are in the sky?  
The haunting of a vanished smile,  
And memories trooping by.

OLD MAN: Well, love's a queer thing, eh?

OLD WOMAN: 'Tis we should know.

OLD MAN: Come, sing us on a little farther, son.

*(They gather up their small baggage and move on.)*

## PART THE FOURTH

*Representing the Spirit of 1801*

SCENE I. San Domingo City, Jan. 2, 1801. *The interior of the cathedral. A great throng of all sorts and conditions of people. Enter first procession of Spanish women beautifully dressed and carrying garlands and posies. Some strew flowers as they go. They make a narrow lane along the aisle through which the clergy approach with crosses, banners, canopy, and with bared feet. Boys stand in the choir swinging incense burners. A majestic largo swells from the organ. Bells outside peal, and in the distance are heard cannon salvos. Behind the clergy comes Toussaint in full military dress between Don Garcia, the governor, and the bishop of the diocese, and followed by Agé and Paul L'Ouverture. Women prostrate themselves before Toussaint as he passes. Then come soldiers and state officials before brilliantly dressed members of Toussaint's guard. The black-robed clergy make a second double row through which Toussaint, the governor, the bishop and other dignitaries move solemnly to the foot of the pulpit.)*

DON GARCIA:

From Cape Samana to the western tip  
Of Tiburon the providence of God  
Leads forth again the timid feet of peace  
Whose tender throat the murderous hand of war  
No more shall throttle. Now the reeking blade  
Shall be transmuted unto pruning hooks,  
And cannon into ploughshares, for this day  
We welcome here with reverent acclaim,  
With honor and with glad obedience,  
The conqueror of Hayti, called of God,  
By more than human genius and the might  
Of his swift arm on every battle field,  
To shame our guilty pride of race, rebuke

The arrogance of nations, and restore  
Another golden age of brotherhood.

VOICES: All hail L'Ouverture!

OTHERS: Long live the Savior of Hayti!

BISHOP: (*Advancing with a hand raised for quiet while he displays the golden key of the city.*)

How beautiful upon the mountain shine  
The feet of them that bring good news of peace.

(*To Toussaint*)

Defender and deliverer, prince of men,  
We bow before you here with thankful hearts,

Desiring to present this golden key  
To San Domingo, signaling thus  
Complete submission of our citizens

To your authority and government.

Accept them, we beseech you, in the name

And sanction of the Holy Trinity.

(*Bows low and offers the key to Toussaint who takes it and slowly ascends the pulpit stairs.*)

VOICES: Long live the black Hercules!

OTHER VOICES: Black Alexander the Great! Napoleon's  
equal, and the first of blacks!

TOUSSAINT:

This key is not the token of a trust  
From that imperial court in old Madrid.  
Wherefore I take it from the bishop's hand  
Not in the name of that great trinity  
Which symbolizes Spain, but by those rights  
Established by the conquering arms of France  
And sanctioned by the treaty of Basel.

I take possession of this Spanish realm

As part of my dominion under France.

But now I solemnly give oath to you  
To rule with justice in the eye of God.

Unlike those captains of the antique age,  
Great Caesar, Genghis Kahn, or Tamburlaine,  
Who made themselves the victims of their greed,

I come commissioned by the hand of God

To be a leader of a new-born race

Whose work is blessing and deliverance.

So may we build a state which after times



May look upon and say our work was good.  
My brother Paul I leave to govern here  
Where Agé held the temporary reins,  
While I myself assume the final task  
Of gathering round me at the northern Cape  
Men of affairs, wisdom and confidence  
To represent our perfect unity  
And frame a constitution that may seal  
The work of our triumphant arms with law.  
For all which consummations let us take  
No honor to ourselves, but unto God  
Ascribe the praise. So let our voices lift  
A glorious Te Deum and Amen.

*(The whole assembly sings Te Deum. Towards the close of it the procession moves out with slow and solemn dignity. Toussaint receives as he passes abasements, salutations, and caresses, amidst shouts of "Long live our Savior," but with no sign of being carried away by these honors.)*

SCENE II. (Six months later. July, 1801.) A street at the Cape, before the Hotel de la Republique. *Borgella, mayor of Port-au-Prince and chairman of the committee appointed by Toussaint to draw up a new constitution, and Vincent, brigadier-general under Toussaint.*)

BORGELLA:

Six fateful months were closed when yesterday  
Toussaint proclaimed the constitution here.  
The people heard him gladly, and their shouts  
Approving his decrees delighted him.

VINCENT:

All this is good, but 'twas my firm advice  
That these adopted measures now proclaimed  
Should tarry for the Consul's nod. He hears  
Day after day in Paris now the tales  
Of all the enemies of L'Ouverture,  
Mulattoes, whites, and many envious blacks.  
They tell him of their grievances, distort  
Extravagantly every word and deed  
Of our great chieftain, urging most of all  
That he designs to make himself a king.  
These are suggestions hateful to the ears  
Of that grim captain who has never brooked  
An equal anywhere in Europe yet,  
And therefore holds Toussaint in pure contempt.

BORGELLA:

But when he sees that hardly half a year  
Of ordered peace in Hayti has brought forth  
A blessed transformation of the island—  
Contentment of the people, industry  
To swell our revenue for public works,  
Schools for our children, churches for our elders,  
The banishment of superstitious cults,  
The degradation of the idle man,  
The vigilant protection of our homes,  
Where women bear and rear their babies up

Without the stultifying curse of fear,  
 And everywhere the airs of freedom blown  
 With adulation of the power of France—  
 When he perceives all this, will he not smile  
 And bless the work that glorifies his name?

VINCENT:

I can but say you do not know the man.  
 I am commanded now by L'Ouverture  
 To come for conference with him tonight  
 At his accustomed leveé, touching ways  
 Of setting forth our proper case in France,  
 If, haply, we may win Napoleon.

BORGELLA:

God speed you in that counsel. I myself  
 Return to waiting tasks in Port-au-Prince.  
*(Exeunt. Enter two white planters.)*

1st PLANTER: 'Tis certain we are in a better case than ever before, although the table talk is ever of troubles to come and woes to fear. We are prospering. The black man plays fair. He respects us. The old planters who went off to the States to keep whole hides, Toussaint has invited back. Those who do not answer, forfeit their lands to him, and these he parcels out to his generals.

2nd PLANTER: The house is built on sand. We are undone by prosperity. Nothing can stand without Napoleon. He is the state. He likes not these doings here.

1st PLANTER: But he has time and again approved Toussaint's work, confirmed him in all his titles, and sent him flattering tokens of regard.

2nd PLANTER: But Napoleon has ordered that Toussaint shall embroider upon his banners these words: "France alone can cause your rights to be respected." Do you observe Toussaint doing anything of the kind?

1st PLANTER: This black man knows that he has won his own freedom. I am prepared to see him stand up for that.

2nd PLANTER: What are we white men doing in Hayti anyhow? The tropics belong to black and brown people who are inured to the sun.

1st PLANTER: Tut, Tut! We are going to invent new skins, and make rain or stop it, and put an end to vermin

and malaria and the sleeping sickness. The heat of the sun shall drive our machines.

2nd PLANTER: I think our mission is to keep the world irritated. We hang on for coffee and rubber and sugar and cotton and oil. But, God, how black people must hate us! Well, I'm off for bagging green coffee.

1st PLANTER: We had better let good enough alone. I sell bananas. What's coming is coming, but banana trees demand that you go to them.

*(Exeunt. Enter two blacks.)*

1st BLACK: When shall we stupid blacks be satisfied? Instead of thanking God that a black man has redeemed Hayti from slavery forever, forced the whites to respect us, risen to be Governor of the nation, and opened opportunity for all of us—you whine.

2nd BLACK: Tell me the difference between slavery and labor enforced, a white master and a black master. We are free for naught but work. If a man is not free to be free as he pleases, he is not free. We cannot even enjoy our secret orders. I like to sit in the shade, and take my nap and go to meetings.

1st BLACK: You want to be free for idleness, superstitious ceremonies that cheat poor fools, endless holidays, feasting and dancing, excursions and palavers. L'Ouverture says you must work.

2nd BLACK: That's only saying we must keep on slaving for white people. Who made all these laws anyhow? Not a black man had any hand in them. Eight whites did it all, they say, with one mulatto sitting by approving. They have obeyed Toussaint because he will shower them with favors. And they will make him Governor for life. It is these black men rising up among us whom I watch.

1st BLACK: Who should write a constitution—black men because they are black, or the ablest in law, and great affairs? The meanest Negro is that black who is forever damning white people, chafing against the color bar, pleading that his people may have opportunity to prove their mettle, and then stabs in the back the first of his race who rises to justify the plea.

2nd BLACK: This is not personal you know.

1st BLACK: But it ought to be.

*(Exeunt two blacks. Enter Halaou and Romaine.)*

HALAOU: What's all the oratory about?

ROMAINE: There is only one subject. You and I are out of business. Black people argue for themselves. They care little any longer for virgins, or roosters, or black pigs, or holy snakes. It is all "Our rights, our wrongs, and the white man."

*(Enter Jacques with his guitar.)*

HALAOU: Who rights wrongs or wrongs rights or wrongs himself or rights another?

JACQUES: I'll show you how to set all right.

ROMAINE: You're a singing man and you think that lets you through, but you'll pretty soon learn something about honest work.

JACQUES: Singing's work, the only honest work. I'm going to make music at the levee tonight and ask for a place in the new Black State.

HALAOU: Let him be; we'll go.

*(Exeunt all.)*

SCENE III. A leveé at Toussaint's home. *A large hall at the right, a smaller room at the left. By the door of the hall at the right stands a butler in livery. The furniture and lighted candles are tasteful and elegant. The butler ushers in guests of many kinds, chiefly people of culture and distinction, but also many of humbler station. They sit or stand, and become animated in conversation and greetings. The women are brilliantly gowned, the men in evening dress or striking uniform. A string band with Jacques and Marie enter and take their places quietly in the left rear corner. Over a door in the rear centre hang heavy curtains. A door at the left leads into the smaller room which Toussaint uses as an office for private conferences. Here is a table with books, papers, and chairs. A secretary is seen dimly laboring with these papers. The string band begins to play sweetly. All is gay and vivacious. Suzanne, entering rear centre, stands with maternal dignity and smiles a welcome to all. Everybody stands at her entrance, among these Vincent, Michel, and Raymond, French commissioners.*

SUZANNE: (*Greeting one after another.*)

It is so good to see so many friends. You are all very welcome.

1st LADY: We are honored in this happy evening.

2nd LADY: And in the prospect of seeing your distinguished husband.

SUZANNE: He is a very good man, but such unending cares and labor!

SOLDIER: He has done so much for us, madame, that we would all gladly share his burdens.

SUZANNE: I think he always takes upon himself more than he asks another to bear.

CITIZEN: Truly there have been few men like him in the world for generous dealings.

BLACK MAN: As long as Hayti sounds in the ears of men, they will remember the man who made her free forever.

SUZANNE: He thinks never of what he has done but always of what he is still to do.

PRIEST: May the great God establish the work of his hands upon him.

VINCENT: No one knows what to make of L'Ouverture in France.

RAYMOND: Well do I know that.

MICHEL: We must somehow make the Consul know the man as he is. This elegance and order and prosperity can scarcely be credited abroad.

SUZANNE: You gentlemen are very kind. You can help us greatly, I am sure.

*(To the room generally.)*

There is music tonight which I hope you will enjoy, and a girl who sings with a guitar. Will you hear them? My husband will be here presently.

MANY VOICES: O do let us hear them!

*(Suzanne beckons and Jacques and Marie come forward. Jacques plays and Marie courtsies and sings.)*

When love is faithful, all is well,  
The heavens shine, the world is fair,  
Labor is sweet, and beauty breathes  
Her benedictions everywhere.

When love is done, the world is dead,  
The skies become a prison dome,  
Toil is a blighting, and the soul  
Strays in a void without a home.

*(Applause and cries of "O sing again.")*

SUZANNE: I think he will be coming now.

*(Moves toward rear. Enter Toussaint through curtains clad in undress of a general. There is a hush at once. Everyone rises and stands with the greatest respect. Toussaint touches the hand of Suzanne with a smile, then salutes the three commissioners. Slowly and with great dignity he makes the rounds of the whole circle with greetings. A very beautiful woman in extreme décolleté, whom he has not recognized, rushes up to him emotionally.)*

WOMAN: O, Sir, may I—*(Extending her hand.)*

TOUSSAINT: *(Standing back from her, he draws a handker-*

*chief deliberately from his bosom and quietly covers the woman's breast.)*

Madame, there is no beauty in a woman like modesty.  
*(The woman abashed retires amidst some general confusion.)*

May every heart be happy here tonight,  
 And let us for a little while forget  
 The burdens of the day. These soothing strings  
 Will draw us all into a world of beauty.

In these sweet strains it is our privilege  
 To have some foretaste of those harmonies  
 That rule in heaven. Words can never utter  
 Our inmost heart's desire, but music speaks  
 Articulately the ineffable —

The lowest range of man's depravity,  
 The highest reaches of his hopes sublime.  
 And in the dance alone our bodies find  
 The rhythmic freedom of the universe.

*(There is music and beautiful dancing and much gayety, during all of which Toussaint engages first one and then another, but chiefly the commissioners in conversation aside. The music ceases just as some commotion is noticed at the door to the right.)*

BUTLER: An old woman desires a word, Sir. I said this was no time to come.

TOUSSAINT: Call her in, boy. All our mothers will some day be old.

*(Boy rushes out and brings the old woman, who is somewhat overcome by the scene.)*

OLD WOMAN: Your mercy, Sir, on an old woman with but a few days before her. *(She kisses Toussaint's hand.)* My husband and I journeyed across Hayti to see you stand in the pulpit at San Domingo and take possession of the Kingdom. He said the Scriptures were to be fulfilled that day. He had read all the prophets, and prayed to live to see Ethiopia stretching forth her hands to God. A great believer in the Bible! And when he had seen you there in all the glory and honor, and heard all your wise words, he prayed that he might die there. But I implored God to let him take me home again, and the boy who is playing here led us down there and all the way back by the cheer



of his good-natured singing and playing. He has played for many a year and he loves our precious Marie. My husband loved that boy too, because he made beautiful music and kept our Marie cheerful and dancing. And he prayed that they might wed and be honored in your service. And his last words were, "Bless my children, Jacques and Marie." I heard about tonight, and I have come to pray you, Sir, that they may wed in your presence, so that my husband's spirit may rest, and I may die and join him in peace.

TOUSSAINT: This Jacques and Marie are here?

JACQUES: We are here, Sir.

MARIE: (*Rushing up to her old mother.*)

Why did you do it before all these people.

TOUSSAINT: Would you have your mother happy, Marie?

MARIE: I would if I could, Sir. (*Courtsying*)

TOUSSAINT: And you would have Marie happy, Jacques?

JACQUES: O, I should like that, Sir, above all that I know.

TOUSSAINT: What is your occupation, Jacques?

JACQUES: I have been through the wars, Sir, not to fight, Sir, but to cheer weary people with my guitar.

TOUSSAINT: That instrument is better than a culverin, and renders nobler service.

JACQUES: I thank you, Sir, and may I live to serve you.

TOUSSAINT: What man of God is here?

PRIEST: I am at your service, Sir.

TOUSSAINT: Let this good woman see her daughter wed.

And let us all be happy witnesses.

*(The priest marries Jacques and Marie, Toussaint standing by Jacques and the old woman by Marie. Then there are congratulations and merry-making and music and dancing, the wedded pair being the centre of much interest. Gradually the guests withdraw. The large hall is darkened. Suzanne goes out through the rear curtains after pressing Toussaint's hand. Toussaint, Raymond, Vincent, and Michel retire to the small room at the left. They seat themselves around the table, while the secretary continues his work amid the pile of papers.)*

TOUSSAINT:

You are the men on whom I must rely

For wisdom and calm judgment through the straits

And crises of the times. Freedom is won,  
 The whole of Hayti unified, and peace  
 Wedded to industry breeds all the arts;  
 But these are boons that lack security  
 Without the ratifying will of France.  
 The silence of the Consul troubles me.  
 My personal ambassadors, my letters,  
 Have drawn from him no clear acknowledgement,  
 No sign of his unsullied pleasure. Hence,  
 You gentlemen, you three commissioners,  
 Have now no duty with a graver claim  
 Than this of bringing France to our support.

MICHEL:

I think, Sir, there is little known 'abroad,  
 Of Hayti as it is beneath your sway.  
 Your rule is so complete and resolute  
 That I perceive no cause why France should send  
 Another agent, and I think my part  
 And my best service is to make this known.

TOUSSAINT: And you will tell them of our loyalty.

MICHEL: I will go back at once and publish it. (*Exit.*)

RAYMOND:

It seems that Michel is profoundly stirred  
 By the strict order, the obedience  
 The industry, the evident content  
 Of all the people under your new laws,  
 And none the less, I think, by what he saw  
 At your leveé tonight. The elegance,  
 The grace, the charm, the personality  
 Of your black guests were startling, strange, and new.  
 These are the white man's old prerogatives,  
 As he supposes, over all the world.  
 And then the easy freedom of the hour,  
 The equal dignity of man with man,  
 Was tonic to his stomach.

TOUSSAINT:

You know there are two things we blacks must do—  
 Prove to the world our full humanity,  
 And then work out with prayer our special gifts.

RAYMOND:

I think that I will follow Michel, Sir;

Perchance I may persuade him to some help. (*Exit.*)

TOUSSAINT:

Well, Vincent, you and I are left alone.  
You only of the three I dare to trust.  
Michel is full of studied compliment.  
His narrow eyes squint with a hard dissembling.  
His lips move fast with ambiguities.  
Raymond is full of flattery. When he speaks  
He barely covers up his deep dislike,  
Though not a sentence but is dutiful.  
His eyes are never level with my own.  
Such men I never trust. He is not with us.  
They are your colleagues, my superiors,  
But you are not of them. Therefore I ask  
Your honest judgment in our present state.

VINCENT:

The air is full of menace, and the tides  
That beat upon our shores are treacherous.  
In candor I must say I fear the worst.  
Malicious slander, jealousy, and greed  
Are working like those termites that destroy  
The inward heart of mighty forest trees.  
I carried to the Tuileries a true  
Unvarnished record of your services  
To freedom and to France. I saw your sons  
Acclaimed with honors, and I heard your name  
Spoken with admiration; still my mind  
Was heavy when I marked the Consul's mien.

TOUSSAINT:

One way alone is left. Take to the Consul  
This constitution. Tell Napoleon  
It is the crown of all our years of toil,  
The guarantee of freedom for all time,  
The bulwark of the people's confidence.  
Tell him that in this instrument I sought  
Not merely to express the black man's dreams  
But all the rights of men of every race.  
Tell him it bears no mark of prejudice,  
Being the work of Hayti's ablest minds,  
Schooled in the laws of nations, that my hand  
Lay on it only in directing it.

Tell him that eight of his own blood and hue  
With only one mulatto built this code,  
So wide the gulf that lies as yet between  
The liberal learning of his race and mine.  
Tell him that if a single thread of wrong  
Runs through the fabric, we will never sleep  
Until we draw it out and make it right;  
But if these laws in substance and intent  
Be good, we will stand by them with our lives.  
*(He looks Vincent searchingly in the eyes.)*

Vincent, is that the way a man like me  
Should speak, and bear himself?

VINCENT: I think it is.

TOUSSAINT: Then, Vincent, will you go?

VINCENT: Good, Sir, I will. *(Exit.)*

TOUSSAINT: *(Stands silently a moment in thought.)*

Mysterious God, I ask not good or ill,  
I only ask to know Thy sovereign will.

*(To his secretary.)*

Now let us go to work.

*(They bury themselves in labor at the table.)*

## PART THE FIFTH

*Representing the spirit of 1802*

SCENE I. The Cape, a street before the Hotel de la Republique.  
*People of all sorts pass to and fro and in and out of the hotel.*

1st CITIZEN: Again we are choosing sides.

2nd CITIZEN: I hear every kind of report. Napoleon is pleased. Napoleon is angry. He will destroy L'Ouverture. He will glorify L'Ouverture. What is up, man?

1st CITIZEN: Have you not read between the lines of Toussaint's latest declaration? He exhorts us to be good Frenchmen, but to be ready to render any service required in defending our rights under the new constitution. We ought to know by now what such things mean.

2nd CITIZEN: But what do you really know?

1st CITIZEN: Napoleon despises Toussaint and all his works. I know that much. Everything is set for action. I hear that ships are creeping out of every port of France and Holland bringing a great army of veterans from the Alps, the Rhine and the Nile. They are to be under Napoleon's brother-in-law, LeClerc, who brings along, 'tis said, his beautiful wife, Pauline, Napoleon's sister, a lady of luxurious ways. He is seconded by able generals and by all those mulattoes who for years have studied revenge. (*Two blacks shamble up.*) All is set for war. Nothing will save L'Ouverture.

1st BLACK: Is there going to be another war, Sir?

1st CITIZEN: How did you get into this conversation?

2nd BLACK: We just come in, Sir: no harm.

1st CITIZEN: You are going to learn some lessons soon.

2nd BLACK: I'll tell you something. There's coming another war and you will need us. I saw it all in a dream. I had a gun on my shoulder, and didn't know where I was going

until two white men begged me to guard them on their way to the mountains. War is coming soon.

1st CITIZEN: You had better get on and save yourselves. We'll let you know when you are wanted.

*(Exeunt blacks.)*

2nd CITIZEN: We must bear a little with these fellows. They have a peculiar way of being useful.

*(They move on talking. Enter two mulattoes.)*

1st MULATTO: *(Tossing up a coin.)*

Heads, Toussaint; tails, Rigaud.

2nd MULATTO: I am for Rigaud now as ever. Our time is almost here. They say the Consul is so hot against these blacks that when he heard that Gregoire, Bishop of Blois, had made a flaming speech in defense of the black republic, he cursed the bishop and pronounced Toussaint a bandit and an outlaw. And he has banished Vincent to the lonely island of Elba, because Vincent went over with this new constitution and defended it boldly in the Consul's presence.

1st MULATTO: If there's business to do, we have no time to lose.

2nd MULATTO: We'll meet again. Adieu.

*(Exeunt.)*

SCENE II. A hill overlooking the tranquil Bay of Samana. *A French fleet is seen below in the harbor. Toussaint stands apart from his brother Paul quietly viewing the pageant through field glasses.*

TOUSSAINT: Good brother Paul, unless some miracle  
Of Providence befriends us, we are lost ;  
The ships of all the world are gathered there.

PAUL:

What is the meaning of those bristling decks?  
We are at peace, and yet we are at war.  
They should be here as friends, but they appear  
In all the character of enemies.  
If they are Frenchmen, we should welcome them,  
And yet in that we seem to court disaster.

TOUSSAINT:

Well, hear me, Paul. I know the whole design.  
For some six months I have been gathering up,  
By messengers from every ship, the truth.  
Napoleon, with unction on his tongue,  
Has lauded our success and flattered me,  
While in his heart determining our doom.  
He hates the black republic, and has sworn  
To humble me and make us slaves again ;  
And I have sworn by God that he shall fail.

PAUL:

Know you their dispositions and commands?

TOUSSAINT:

These I have learned, I think with certainty.  
Some sixty ships with Villaret Joyeuse  
As admiral, and forty thousand men  
Hardened through all of Europe's bloody wars  
Come with the Consul's brother-in-law, LeClerc,  
Who bears the title, Captain-General.  
Now for their dispositions and my own:  
To San Domingo City Kerverseau  
Will lead a squadron. You will meet him there.

Another under Boudet will go on  
To Port-au-Prince and range along the South  
Where I have ordered three mulatto chiefs,  
LaPlume, Agé, and Lamartinière  
To stand against him, while brave Dessalines  
Comes with his force if need be from the West.  
The strongest squadron will attempt the North,  
Rochambeau at Fort Dauphin, and LeClerc  
Sailing upon the Cape. To that defense  
I have assigned Christophe whom I will join  
With all the speed the distance will allow.  
So is the map laid out, and from this hour  
The struggle will be on to seal our fate.  
Your hand, good brother Paul; we go to fight  
Not by ourselves but with a God of right.



SCENE III. The Cape. *Christophe by a small table surrounded by soldiers, citizens, and courtiers. One of the French squadrons under LeClerc is drawn up directly before the city. Christophe is talking with officers but every little while scans the ships with glasses.*  
(Enter Lebrun.)

LEBRUN: Sir, LeClerc, Captain-General of the colony, Commander-in-chief of the army of San Domingo, and present Director with Villaret Joyeuse of the French squadron now anchored in the harbor, sends greetings, and requests that you make preparation for the reception of the French army which he desires at once to bring ashore.

CHRISTOPHE:

The governor of Hayti, by our law.  
And the commander of all armies here,  
Is Toussaint L'Ouverture. In him alone  
I recognize supreme authority.  
Therefore I cannot grant LeClerc's request,  
Until I have directions from my chief.

LEBRUN: Why, Sir, we are Frenchmen. This is a French colony. We are here as friends and fellow-citizens of the republic. We bring forces to insure the liberties you have won and to safe-guard your prosperity. In such a case no order can be needed.

CHRISTOPHE:

If you are friends, why are those foreign flags  
Raised on those ships, and why should I believe  
That France would send for peaceful purposes  
This army and those frowning men-of-war?

LEBRUN: 'Tis not a soldier's part to interpret the errands of his captain. LeClerc thinks highly of your powers and of your leadership. He intends to heighten your honors and increase your rewards. You must be aware, Sir, of the loss to you and the dangers threatening, if you affront the Consul's representative.

CHRISTOPHE:

Those dangers move me not, for, like yourself,  
I am a soldier, and know my duty well.  
I will transmit at once to L'Ouverture  
All you have said, and ask to know his will;  
And until then I cannot let you in.

LEBRUN: I will go, but do not chafe if what we ask in friendly terms, denied, be taken by force, with or without the will of your black chief.

CHRISTOPHE:

Now you reveal your purpose, and I swear  
That you shall tread on ashes if you come.  
*(Three citizens come up.)*

CITIZENS: Will you permit the three of us to go with him to this General LeClerc? A few minutes rowing will bring us to his ship. We may explain to him our loyalty to France, and plead with him to hold his army off.

CHRISTOPHE: My full consent to that is freely given.

*(Christophe writes a hurried note at the table and hands it to a courier.)*

Speed with this, courier, to L'Ouverture.

*(Enter another courier in great excitement with a handful of bills.)*

COURIER: These papers, Sir, are scattered through the town. The man who rowed ashore to see you let fall a whole bundle of them as if by accident. The people are reading them everywhere. One paper, signed by LeClerc, calls on us to rally around the French army. The other, a proclamation signed by Napoleon, professes friendship for the colony and demands obedience to his authority.

CHRISTOPHE: *(Reading the papers carelessly.)* I know the meaning of these documents.

*(Enter third courier.)*

What is the news you bring from Fort Dauphin?

COURIER: General Rochambeau has already landed his troops, covering them with the guns on his vessels in Mancinille Bay. The garrison, entirely surprised and unprepared, made no resistance. The French are scattering papers, declaring their peaceful intentions, and calling the people to rally for freedom and the glory of France.

CHRISTOPHE: What way are they now moving from the Fort?

COURIER: It seems that they will be upon us here, but no one knows.

*(Crowds of people pass by gesticulating and talking excitedly. Re-enter three citizens.)*

CHRISTOPHE: You did not parley long. What is the word?

CITIZEN: LeClerc would have no words, Sir. He commands us to say that he will within one half hour come ashore with his whole army.

CHRISTOPHE:

Then, citizens and soldiers, let the clock  
Tick action every minute for our lives  
And for the honor of our little state.  
Take you these faggots which I have prepared  
And burn the city down. I will begin  
With my own home. Go you from street to street;  
Make mad incendiaries of our folk,  
Burn everything combustible, and run  
For safety to the mountains. Drive before you  
The whole white population to be held  
As hostages until Toussaint arrives.  
Then when those wicked murderers come in,  
They shall not take a city, but shall walk  
On ashes and be stifled with the smoke.  
Death to the man who tarries in the work!

*(They all take faggots and hurry away with great excitement and wild cries. Columns of smoke rise up in different directions with here and there the spreading light of the conflagration. Women and children rush by in distraction. Negroes are seen driving white people before them, but without violence.)*

SCENE IV. The mountains south of the Cape. *Soldiers are guarding a corral of white people. Toussaint and Christophe meet.*

TOUSSAINT:

You have performed the perfect soldier's part.  
All thanks and honor, Christophe, for I dream  
That in this loyal comradeship we still  
May make the world aware that we are men.

CHRISTOPHE:

No man can merit praise because he does  
His duty, but it braces up the will  
To have the commendation of your chief.

TOUSSAINT:

But you have taught a lesson which the years  
Will fructify with meaning to all lands.  
It is that dark men everywhere some day  
Will stand in honor for their manhood rights,  
Loyal to one another in the cause.

CHRISTOPHE:

What's to be done with these white people, Sir?  
Demands are made by many angry blacks  
That every one be shot to signify  
To those marauders what they may expect.

TOUSSAINT:

Let not a single one come yet to harm;  
You see, Christophe, this overcoming evil  
With good is noblest in extremities.

CHRISTOPHE:

Know you, Sir, how those other French divisions  
Are moving in the South and in the West?

TOUSSAINT:

The ships of France encircle all of Hayti.  
At San Domingo City Kerverseau,  
A man of calm, persuasive dignity,  
Has won a dangerous footing by the suave,  
Mild overtures he offered in the name

Of peace. My brother Paul was led astray  
 By two conflicting messages from me—  
 One urging strict resistance there, and one,  
 Sent later, saying he might temporize,  
 If in that case he saw advantages.  
 'Twas necessary strategy, but he  
 Construed the note to mean that he should yield.  
 He therefore joined with Kerverseau, and marches  
 Against his will to battle with his brother.

CHRISTOPHE:

That is a humbling dispensation truly.  
 Is nothing better blowing in the wind?

TOUSSAINT:

The whole first chapter reads awry; the last,  
 Let us pray God, will balance the account.  
 The South is sorely shaken. Boudet's force  
 Marched into Port-au-Prince, where Agé made  
 A trifling counter, weakly giving up  
 To that shrewd Frenchman's blandishments and bribes.  
 To him succeeded Lamartinière  
 Who strove to hold the city; but La Plume,  
 In open treachery, led all his men  
 Straight to the enemy and let him in.  
 So he comes on against us, cherishing  
 The hope that this defection will retrieve  
 The broken lot of his mulatto caste.  
 It was too late when Dessalines swept down  
 To save our honor; but he holds the heights  
 North of the city, resolute and strong.

CHRISTOPHE:

O God, deliver to my eager hand  
 The throats of those damned renegades!

TOUSSAINT:

This much is gained; we know the traitors now.  
 O Christophe, let us thank the Providence  
 That binds us thus in closer fellowship—  
 You and myself, Belaire and Dessalines,  
 Moise, and the dauntless Lamartinière.  
 O never doubt it, man, we are enough  
 To glorify our calling, and to prove  
 That freedom teaches freemen how to die.

Hold you this North securely; Dessalines  
Will harry them both south and west, while I  
Retire to Ennery where LeClerc will send  
His last instructions from Napoleon.

*(Exit Toussaint. Christophe is seen giving orders to his guard.)*

SCENE V. Toussaint's country house at Ennery. *Toussaint, with the marks of hard riding upon him, enters his study where Suzanne sits knitting.*

SUZANNE: A gentleman from France came yesterday to beg that I advise you to accept the terms which LeClerc will make by our boys and their instructors. They will be here today and are now due.

TOUSSAINT: What did you say to him?

SUZANNE: I said that these were matters for your thought.

TOUSSAINT: It is a wise wife that knows how to speak about her husband's business.

*(A knock at the door. Suzanne opens it. Enter Coisnos and Granville, French tutors, with Isaac and Placide. The boys in brilliant uniform rush to their parents who embrace them in turn passionately. Toussaint squares himself before them, holding each by a shoulder and looking each intently in the face.)*

You look like soldiers, and you stand like men

Of discipline — no longer like mere boys.

And here, I take it, are the friends to whom

We owe our thanks for these desired results.

*(He turns now to look at the tutors. He extends his hand to Coisnos who steps back and deliberately clasps his hands behind him. Granville also steps back a little.)*

COISNOS:

I cannot take your hand in honesty

Until I know the man I am to greet.

If you feel any gratitude to France

For what you see in these accomplished lads,

I come to ask that you shall cease at once

Resistance to the cause of France in Hayti,

And charge your sons to duty with their sire.

TOUSSAINT:

You and your captain come to Hayti, Sir,

With neither right nor reason, to enslave

A people who will die for liberty

As long as I command them; and I swear  
Resistance until death. As for my sons,  
Let each obey the promptings of his heart.  
If with an honest mind they choose LeClerc,  
My love goes with them. If they stand with me  
They never shall have cause to be ashamed.  
*(He turns and looks steadfastly at his boys.)*

ISAAC:

Father, I think I owe so much to France  
And all the Consul's ministers, that Paris  
Has come to be for me a second home.  
Before we came aboard our ship, Farfait,  
Napoleon's minister of war, proclaimed  
A banquet in our honor, seated us  
Among illustrious guests, and there presented  
These costly uniforms and these rare swords.  
Of you and your achievements he discoursed  
With touching admiration, and expressed  
His confidence that we could make you see  
That the sole purpose of this armament  
Is to sustain your hand, and bring you peace.  
In honest conscience I must stand with France.

SUZANNE *(Burying her head on Isaac's shoulder)*: My  
good boy, my good boy, you will not leave us!

TOUSSAINT *(Holds Isaac by the shoulders, again with a  
searching countenance.)* Isaac, you are a man, and you  
have chosen.

ISAAC: I am so sorry if you think me wrong.

PLACIDE:

I, too, accord to France the thanks I owe  
For generous studies, manly discipline  
In all the arts of war, honor and gifts,  
In token, we were told, of your deserts.  
But these are for a price I cannot pay,  
For I have had no other aim but this—  
To bring whatever I have learned abroad  
For service to my father and my home.

*(Suzanne embraces him silently. Toussaint stands a  
moment gazing at him. Then takes him also by both  
shoulders.)*



TOUSSAINT: Placide, you are a man and you have chosen.  
COISNOS:

Ingrate, I brand you a deserting shirk,  
Turning upon your benefactors.

GRANVILLE: General, I dread the consequences to you and  
Hayti.

TOUSSAINT (*To Moise*):

Let Isaac and these gentlemen go back  
To General LeClerc. God save you, son.

*(Exeunt Isaac with Coisnos and Granville who take a  
careful look at the room, but without any friendly adieu.)*

SCENE VI. Fort Crete-a-Pierrot in the Cohos Mountains above the Artibonite. March, 1802. *Dessalines, Lamartinière, officers and soldiers of all races. A typical tropical gorge below. All are busy on the ramparts. Snipers are firing, bombs are bursting, and there is a steady roar of cannon. Dessalines and Lamartinière are in command.*

DESSALINES:

There's nothing on this mountain now but death.

*(Goes to the gates of the fort and throws them open.)*

If any man is fearful, let him go. The gates are open.

*(Several sneak through and slip down to the rear.)*

The devil take their coward roinish souls!

*(Lights a torch and springs to the top of a powder magazine.)*

Now if another man stirs from his place,

I'll set the faggot to this magazine,

And blow the mountain up. So fight, or die.

LAMARTINIÈRE:

These hellish bombs that burst about our heads

Are fast demolishing the outer walls,

And breaking loose great boulders from the hills.

DESSALINES:

Hold this redoubt. I will climb higher up

And improvise another.

*(A white soldier is seen climbing up from below with a letter raised above his head.)*

LAMARTINIÈRE:

Who is that man

Right under us there, beckoning our leave

To hand some paper up?

DESSALINES:

Shoot down the dog.

*(A sniper picks off the man who falls back dead.)*

We'll read their lies no more. Their oaths are stench.

Rake them with grape. You men come up with me.

*(Selecting a few.)*

And you, *(Selecting two)* acting the old man and his wife,

One dumb and crippled and the other blind,

Crawl down some hidden way, enter their camp  
For alms, take note of all, and clamber back.  
Have you the nerve for that?

MEN: We'll put it through.

SNIPER (*Firing*):

That shot sliced something from their captain's cheek—  
That captain Debelle there. See how he reels.

LAMARTINIÈRE:

Their column halts to bear the leader up.  
But, God, the shock of these infernal bombs!

SCENE VII. The French army below struggling through jungle grass, the matted roots of mangrove trees and marshy swamp ground.

LECLERC (*Rushing up to Debelle who has fallen wounded, and rallying his halted charge around himself.*)

I will myself lead on this second charge.

Debelle, that wound needs dressing. Get you back

To safety in the rear, but tell me first

What is our loss in this the first attempt

To carry Crete-a-Pierrot?

DEBELLE:

At least

Four hundred men have fallen in the gorge.

I wish I could fight on, but I am faint.

(*He is carried back. Enter black woman, dumb and lame, and black man, showing only the white of his eyes. Woman makes many dumb motions.*)

MAN:

Mercy, Sir, on two helpless slaves. By the grace of God, protect us. You are our saviors, and we have crawled through the grass to stay with you and help you.

LECLERC: What help can two such helpless creatures bring?

MAN: We can warn you against these lowlands, venomous snakes, the crocodiles, a hundred fevers carried by swarms of mosquitoes, a thousand diseases from poisonous plants, the snares of the roots of the saman and the screw-pine and the mangrove. Then I can tell you how the terrible black men in the mountains fight. But beware of the fevers, Sir.

LECLERC:

Ha! Ha! The white man can live where he will.

This is no place for cripples. Get you gone.

MAN: We have no hope unless we stay with you.

(*They limp off helplessly. As soon as they are a little way behind a great tree, they straighten up and run.*)

SOLDIER: They're spies. See! See! They are damnable spies!

*(He shoots, but misses them).*

LECLERC: Well, that was clever.

SOLDIER: Shall I pursue them?

LECLERC:

No, fall in the ranks.

Now on again, my soldiers; we will gain

This stony hill with a determined mind.

Let one incessant stream of solid balls

Blaze from our ordnance till we batter down

That stubborn rampart. Every man pick off

One of those blacks there sniping from the rocks,

And climb with all your ears and eyes, or else

Prepare to feed the vultures and the dogs.

*(They charge, but LeClerc himself is badly cut by a ball from above. Enter Rochambeau with reinforcements, rallying the army which is falling back. He props up LeClerc who is bathed in blood.)*

ROCHAMBEAU: Good Sir, I'll lead you back.

LECLERC: No, Rochambeau;

Give me an aide; lead on the charge again;

Keep up the cannonade. A thousand men

May fall, but we must blast this hill away.

*(Exit, drooping on the shoulder of an aide.)*

ROCHAMBEAU:

On, up again, my men. France calls you on.

Though bathed in blood, and pelted with the rain

Of bullets from on high, though this defile

Be glutted with our dead, we will not turn.

*(The black soldiers on the heights sing the Marseillaise in a great sudden chorus.)*

FRENCH SOLDIER:

Can they that sing the Marseillaise be foes!

How can we fight with men who sing that song!

*(The line halts.)*

ROCHAMBEAU:

Up, on, I say! Keep firing. 'Tis a ruse.

SCENE VIII. The upper fort again. *Dessalines, Lamartinière.*  
*Enter the two spies.*

DESSALINES: What did you find below?

FIRST SPY: Dead men, 1200 of them, and dead women and children who tried to follow them. Every stream is red. The swamps reek with rotting bodies. There is no burying. I saw two crocodiles chewing up two women. There are swarms of dogs and vultures. The sight is sickening.

SECOND SPY: But 20,000 soldiers are coming on with heavy guns and fresh supplies. The fever has worked off a great toll. That is why Rochambeau is putting all his power into this thrust. They are depending on the heavy guns, after the manner of Napoleon. They will not turn from this place.

DESSALINES:

Then, Lamartinière, we'll draw away.  
They have the clear advantage of supplies  
And ammunition. Every hour means  
Another section of our breastworks lost.  
We'll draw away, but when they reach this height,  
They shall find only rocks and shattered trees.

LAMARTINIERE:

And they will learn that sometimes victory  
Is purchased far more dearly than defeat.  
(*Enter Chany, aide of Toussaint.*)

DESSALINES: What now of L'Ouverture?

CHANY:

He sent me, General,  
To urge the course on which you have resolved,  
He held Rochambeau back with prodigies  
Of daring at the deep ravine Coulevre,  
Dividing his main force, halting a while  
His juncture with LeClerc, then fled away  
Into the northern hills. Christophe and he  
Gained no clear victory, nor yet sustained  
Defeat; and so I see it is with you.

As long as we can pass from range to range

Among these mountains, we can wear them down.

DESSALINES:

Come, men, away. Let them climb up to find  
The dumb reproach of our unburied dead,  
Rocks, ruins, and the solitude of trees.

*(Exeunt.)*





Upon my word that Hayti shall be free,  
And they themselves held up in dignity.  
Toussaint, with more than mortal genius, still  
Can beat us down, so long as Dessalines  
And Christophe stand beside him, and to these,  
These two, we must address our strategy.  
I have already sounded Christophe out,  
And find him vulnerable. Dessalines  
Will follow after him. They love Toussaint,  
But honors and emoluments much more.  
Within this hour they all will join us here,  
Toussaint and his best men, and you shall see  
What Gallic wit and strategy can be.

*(Exeunt.)*

SCENE X. A mountain road, leading to the Cape. *Toussaint and Christophe meet.*

CHRISTOPHE:

I bring my service, General, and pray  
Your pardon when I tell you that before  
You called me to this conference today  
I had already spoken with LeClerc.  
He offered peace to Hayti, rated you  
The foremost of all Negroes of the earth,  
Stood for the independence of the island,  
And swore that we should have complete control  
Of all the government with offices  
Of honor, and unstinting, rich reward,  
If only we put our resistance by  
And pledge allegiance to the cause of France.

TOUSSAINT (*With great feeling and deliberation*):

Christophe, you know that I have trusted you.  
We two have stood together all these years  
In manly loyalty of comradeship  
Before the world. Must we be sundered now  
By these old tricks and wiles? Have we not learned  
Our final lesson from experience  
Written across the bosom of this island  
In streams of blood? You know you had no right  
To talk of terms without my clear advice.  
Why have you done this?

CHRISTOPHE (*Somewhat embarrassed*):

I have noted here  
(*Handing Toussaint a sealed letter.*)  
Briefly my reasons as in duty bound,  
And in all candor as a soldier should.  
I have but listened to a proffering  
Of all the objects we have battled for,  
And think I am not blameable in this.

TOUSSAINT: Go you ahead, and leave me for a while. (*Exit Christophe.*) (*Toussaint opens the letter slowly and reads.*)

General: The Captain-General of the French army, with full authority from the First Consul, grants all we ask—peace, freedom, office and reward—upon the fair condition that we cease resistance to the arms of France. This is victory without more weariness, suffering, and blood. I accept these terms. Dessalines will follow my example. Since you have asked no more, I think you will grant no less.—*Christophe.*

*(He stares straight up towards the heavens, and slowly tears the letter into shreds.)*

Christophe and Dessalines have left me then.

Great God, preserve our souls; we are but clay!

*(Enter two old voodoo women.)*

Ha! And you still survive to plague the world!

FIRST OLD WOMAN:

L'Ouverture of Hayti, heed

What we in the future read.

TOUSSAINT *(Looking upon them with contempt)*:

I tell you I will heed but God alone.

No man is worthy, and such shapes as yours

Bring but a prescience of the powers of hell,

And hell I know. Still I should pity you.

SECOND OLD WOMAN:

Now the web of fate is spun,

Evil diced with good and won,

Now your little day is done.

You shall have from war release,

But beware the snares of peace.

Lest her viperous treasons sting you

Take the talisman we bring you.

FIRST OLD WOMAN:

Take it L'Ouverture, for hope

Without this can have no scope.

Man's stark will is but a brittle

Stick to lean on; bend a little.

TOUSSAINT *(Takes the little bag offered him, looks at it scornfully and hurls it away)*:

You will not die, but I am well prepared.

BOTH OLD WOMEN: Alas, Sir, there is no hope.

*(Exeunt.)*

TOUSSAINT: Ha. *(Goes off in profound thought.)*

SCENE XI. The Cape. A large room at LeClerc's headquarters with a door in the rear. *To the left can be seen a portion of the public square where citizens of all colors and nationalities mingle freely and cordially. There is an air of excitement. All the while death carts followed by mourning bands go by. LeClerc, with his generals on one side and Toussaint with his on the other make a brilliant contrasting military scene.*

LECLERC:

I greet you, General, with honest joy.  
The happy truce under whose peaceful guard  
We hold this meeting must reveal to all  
The inutility of further strife.  
Your presence here is proof of our good faith  
And your sincerity. So should it be.  
You who have borne so long the dreadful weight  
Of government, and led your people on  
So many years to battle for their rights  
Deserve the fullest measure of our praise;  
And we, who never harbored one intent  
Alien to this your dear-bought freedom, seek  
No other boon than your security.

TOUSSAINT:

If peace and freedom had been more than words,  
And friendly intercourse had borne the mark  
Of charity and serviceable deeds,  
Instead of marching hosts and belching guns,  
This island never would have been the scene  
Of heartless butcheries and deadly hates;  
And thousands upon thousands of our dead  
Would be alive to make poor Hayti bloom.  
The record of the Frenchman here is writ  
In dark, redundant inveracities.  
Wherefore I must beseech your patience, Sir,  
If I am not so confident as you.

LECLERC:

You have had cause for bitterness, I grant;

And in these late encounters, I concede  
 I was a little hasty in rejecting  
 Counsel with you before we entered in.  
 But I am, by the laws of state and war,  
 A general of equal rank with you,  
 And could not properly be headed off  
 By your subordinate, Christophe; and so  
 We came ashore. Let us forget the past,  
 And stand to reparation.

TOUSSAINT: General,  
 I am prepared again to hear your words  
 Speaking of peace.

LECLERC: Then Hayti I declare  
 Forever free, and you her governor  
 For life. Your generals will be employed  
 According to their merits and their ranks.  
 I will stand by as delegate from France  
 To ratify and aid your government.  
 You, on your part, will call your armies back  
 From opposition to our purpose here  
 To peaceful occupations, and admit  
 The kind and friendly offices of France.

TOUSSAINT:  
 All that you grant my people I accept.

LECLERC:  
 Then here's my hand in honor and esteem,  
 And in the promise that from this day forth  
 We all will seek your will and follow it.  
 There never was a soldier who built up  
 From rabble slaves an army better trained  
 To combat with the flower of Europe's troops.  
 I marvel at your genius, Sir, and wonder  
 How you proposed to find supplies and men  
 To match the perfect armament of France.

TOUSSAINT:  
 I would have taken yours.

LECLERC: Well, you shall see  
 How I respect the heart of such a man.  
*(To an officer)*  
 Call in the son who left his father's side,  
 That they may have a sweet reunion here.

*(Isaac L'Ouverture is ushered in through the rear door. There is an affecting scene of reconciliation in silent embraces between father and son.)*

Have you aught else to say, good General?

TOUSSAINT:

I have but one desire for Hayti—peace,  
And for myself the bosom of my home  
There in the plain of Ennery. This achieved,  
My work is done.

LECLERC: Then all is done. We'll make

A proclamation of this settled peace,  
And list the offices we will dispense.

*(He turns to view a passing coffin on a cart with mourners following.)*

Meanwhile, we will attend the sick and maimed:

Would God these tropic fevers might be tamed!

*(Exeunt all with flourish of cornets. Toussaint goes off in strict military order and amidst great acclaim.)*

ROCHAMBEAU:

You see he is the people's idol still;  
As long as that man lives our work is vain.

LECLERC:

Why, man, we have him now. The stage is set  
To close the drama. Come, we'll lay the net.

*(Exeunt.)*

*(Enter Romaine, Halaou, Tomberel in the square outside and two old voodoo women clad now as sisters of charity.)*

ROMAINE: You know I gave up the Virgin and you, Halaou, gave up your white cock, and Tomberel gave up murdering. The new laws have no mercy on us. But what's the use? Nature steps into our places. Every day she heats hotter the rays of the sun, draws up pestilential vapors from every swamp, blows disease in every wind, and in this manner manifests her desire to call us back to service. We still have work to do. *(Four men go by carrying a coffin.)*

HALAOU: That we have. Do you know what yellow fever has done, and war wounds and fire and poison? These agents of the perdurable devil have carried off to damnation twenty thousand of these French soldiers, fifteen hun-

dred officers including fourteen generals, nine thousand sailors, seven hundred medical men who said they could heal sickness and melancholy, and thousands more. See the death processions in this street. The only people who are not mourning are those who must be silly or giddy to keep their spirits up, and the voodoo tribe. (*A cart goes by with dead bodies.*)

**TOMBEREL:** You see nature's business is killing. Nature kills the killer and squares up things. Three hundred fresh corpses are found here every day. Their priests are fools. They pray and die on their knees. Their beads do no more good than a swine's snout or the fangs of a sacred snake. And the doctor gives a pill, and dies. There's scarce a doctor left.

**FIRST OLD WOMAN:** Do you know how the yellow fever takes a white man? We have just raised up two when all others failed. We gave them talismans, and conjured their minds and their beliefs. Lord, how they looked! Red fiery veins stand out on their convulsed bodies. Their faces are inflamed and dyed a dark dull red. Their hot skins show blue streaks and yellow splotches. Their tongues loll. They sweat and gasp. The heat drives them out of their minds. But we bring them up.

**SECOND OLD WOMAN:** We are the only women left in Hayti who are not afraid of the infection. Many is the man who calls us even while he scorns our little bags and ceremonies. But we do get them up.  
(*Another cart goes by with dead bodies.*)

**TOMBEREL:** Look at that. The time will soon be over with all of us. Life is a bauble. I say a man had better dance and drink and have his pleasure. What's the difference? How much better fares the good man? Look there and see.

**FIRST OLD WOMAN:** We must prove the mysteries. Come, Sister, let us go. (*They move on to help a white woman who is creeping along after a coffin. She is evidently glad to have the arm of the old voodoo woman.*)

**HALAOU:** Whoever would have thought that voodoo women would be allowed to go all through the Cape saving people. What a weak race these whites are after all. Tous-

saint could wipe them out now with a thousand ragged men.

ROMAINE: But he will never break his word. He will not do it. He will keep on believing lies.

TOMBEREL: And they will kill him. I've tried to save him, but he will not have it. The whole world's nothing. Come away to the hills.

*(Exeunt.)*



SCENE XII. A beautiful green hillside behind the Cape. *Enter Pauline, carried in a palanquin draped with white satin fringed with green. She wears a green muslin dress embroidered with gold and on her head a gold lace handkerchief. The mulatto General Boyer, and gentlemen, Marie and Jacques, attendants and ladies. The sea stretches out in the distance.*

PAULINE:

O this is lovely! What delightful trees,  
And flowers and sweet greensward and cool sea breezes!  
The horrors of the city there below  
May be forgotten here. O I hate corpses,  
And sick and mourning people, and the heat  
Laden with fever! I must leave it all  
And keep my spirit happy.

BOYER:

You were born,  
Sweet lady, for the dainties of the world—  
For luxuries and pleasantness and ease,  
The things of art and graceful, quiet motion.  
You make me think as I look out to sea  
That I behold the perfect form of Venus  
Skimming the waves upon a shell of pearls.  
And then I think I see here Guenevere  
Riding from Arthur's court all clad in green  
Broided with gold, the glory of her hair  
Inspiring Launcelot to songs of love.

PAULINE:

You are a flatterer, Boyer, for you know  
My husband, who is Arthur, lieth low.  
O my heart, how the fever shakes his body!  
My little head gets dizzy to see him suffer.  
It makes me weak; and so I come away.  
And you are something of an egotist  
To think that you are like Sir Launcelot.  
Now let me see how that brave knight would bend

To pick my slipper up and put it on.

*(She kicks off a slipper.)*

BOYER *(Ceremoniously picking it up and replacing it)*:

The humblest service is a privilege.

PAULINE:

Ha! That was not so good. Try it again.

*(She kicks off the other slipper which Boyer again replaces.)*

Well, maybe you might learn to be a knight.

BOYER:

But truly, madame, I am sorely grieved

To know LeClerc's distress. He is my captain.

PAULINE:

Why, he has nurses. I am useless there.

Let us forget it now and have some joy.

If I was born for dainties, pass them round,

And you go on to practice chivalry.

*(Attendants open tin boxes and pass round cakes, wine and bonbons. Boyer continues his dallying with Pauline, until she seems weary of it and rises.)*

May we not dance before the heat forbids?

Come, Jacques, with your guitar. That instrument

Is all I hear in Hayti. Ladies, come.

*(Jacques plays a lively movement. They square off in very pretty dances in which the grace and charm of Pauline easily excel. She wearies again.)*

'Tis too fatiguing. Marie, will you sing?

MARIE:

Would you like a little song of love and summer?

PAULINE:

Why that's the only song for such a place:

I will lie here and close my eyes and think.

MARIE *(Sings to Jacques's guitar)*:

When summer comes, the rain provides  
Sweet cooling draughts for shrub and tree,  
But in my heart a dearth abides  
Eternally.

When summer comes, the rivers find  
 The widening freedom of the sea,  
 But sorrow stays the widowed mind  
 Eternally.

When summer comes, the bird forsakes  
 Her nest for regions far and free,  
 But something in my bosom breaks  
 Eternally.

PAULINE: You have a pretty voice, but you are sad.

MARIE: I thank you, madame; love is sorrowful.

PAULINE: What do you do, Jacques, to keep Marie sad?

JACQUES: We sing and dance to make people merry, but  
 we know it is only for a little while.

PAULINE: O you are melancholy, too.

JACQUES: I think of all those people down there dying.

PAULINE:

'Tis we who die; your race knows how to live—

They banish gloom with pleasantries and live.

Boyer, I always envy these black people

Their easy-going lack of care and clothing,

Their long siesta hours of lassitude,

Their mysteries, their singing and their dancing,

Their quick forgetfulness of injuries,

Their hatred of unnecessary toil.

I think that they are wise.

BOYER: Why should they toil?

They have small need of house or furniture

Or body cover. Nature hangs their food

Upon a thousand trees, and when drought comes

They tap the water roots and drink their fill.

Their rivers teem with fish, their woods with game

If they are sick, they break a potent twig

And suck the healing sap, or quaff the juice

Of the delicious papua. Gourds and grass

Supply a hundred small domestic needs,

And even when some gala time requires

A festive decoration, they can strip

A tropic tree and find beneath the bark

Layers of lace as delicate and rare  
And intricate as Europe's finest point.

PAULINE:

I like their strong straight bodies, like Marie's  
And Jacques's here. If I could be a queen  
Among these people, O I never would  
Break in upon their wise serenity,  
Or let them ape the foolish toil of white men,  
Or learn to be ashamed of nakedness,  
And never should one missionary come  
To make them civilized. But now you see,  
We are too serious. Come, dance again.

*(They have more music and pretty dancing, Boyer acting the gallant with Pauline. Gradually they tire. Pauline prostrates herself and rests a while, then rises to go.)*

PAULINE:

I think that Jacques is right. Everything wearies  
After a little space. This palanquin  
Is the best thing I have. Let us go down.

*(She stretches herself out luxuriously in the palanquin, motioning that they return to the city. Exeunt.)*

SCENE XIII. The temporary quarters of Brunet, French general, near Gonaives on the Georges plantation. *Brunet, Ferrari, and a guard of French soldiers.*

BRUNET:

Ferrari, we must speed this action through.  
Let nothing slip. Be ready at my nod  
To close upon him. If he speaks fine words,  
Regard them not, and if he makes request  
To see his family, I'll answer him.  
He is most punctual, and will be here.  
LeClerc lies prostrate, but will be revived  
When he is sure that we have trapped the fox.

FERRARI:

All is prepared. The light sail-boat, Creole,  
Is moored close to the shore at Gonaives  
With trusty men aboard, and farther off,  
In the deep waters, rides the man-of-war,  
Heros, with every sailor at his post,  
And guards to make secure the prison rooms,  
For even on the bosom of the deep  
The spirit of this man is dangerous.  
But look you, Sir, the gentleman has come.  
*(Enter Toussaint in military uniform, with his hand on his sword, and followed by ten soldiers.)*

BRUNET *(Very courteously and deferentially)*:

Your health, Toussaint. Accept my welcome here,  
And my best thanks that you are punctual.

TOUSSAINT:

Your letter written in obliging terms  
Of friendly interest, was quite enough  
To bring me promptly, Sir, to give the help  
You seem to seek from my experience,  
Touching some questions of disarmament.  
My wife, whom you invited, is detained  
By household cares, and sends apologies.

BRUNET *(Still very pleasantly)*:



TOUSSAINT:

This is a heinous treason and a crime  
Against a peaceful state. How do you dare  
To touch the person of a General  
Of France, whose services the world acclaims!  
How can you violate a sacred treaty  
By such a coward act of perfidy!

BRUNET:

Sir, we are soldiers and obey our orders.

TOUSSAINT:

I will address LeClerc.

BRUNET:

That will be useless.

TOUSSAINT:

But surely you will not refuse me leave  
To see my family.

BRUNET:

They will be there

With you upon our waiting battleship.

TOUSSAINT:

What battleship! Why should they suffer too?  
They never did you wrong. Let me bear all.

BRUNET:

Good Sir, we must not argue. We must go.

TOUSSAINT (*Looking up to heaven*):

God, why hast thou forsaken me! (*To Brunet*) You think  
In me you cut the tree of freedom down,  
But you have only lopped away a limb.  
The roots of liberty have run so deep  
In this red soil that they can never die.

(*Exeunt in strict military order, Toussaint enclosed within  
the guard behind his men. There is a flash of lightning  
and a dull muttering of thunder in the distance.*)

SCENE XIV. A dungeon in the Besançon prison in the Jura Alps. *Toussaint in a shabby brown suit, bent and gray and wan, is seen towards the right sitting exhausted on his cot beneath a little high-up window. A few embers burn on a small hearth in the rear centre. A small table stands near his cot and by it old Mars Plasir. A narrow door with heavy iron bars is on the left, and through it may be seen the passing and repassing of a guard. The room is damp and dark and cold. On the table is a small coffee pot and a plate of bread.*

TOUSSAINT (*In a deep hollow voice*):

My old enduring friend,

Thank God we are together at the end.

MARS PLASIR: O why, good master, should heaven spare a worthless old man like me instead of you! Are you very weak, my master?

TOUSSAINT: I am very cold. Is there some coffee?

MARS PLASIR (*Goes to the table, feels the pot, and pours a little*): It is cold.

TOUSSAINT: No matter. (*After a little pause.*) Did you tell me something about Rigaud?

MARS PLASIR: The goaler says he is dying in the next dungeon.

TOUSSAINT: Where is my family, Mars?

MARS PLASIR: In Brest or in Paris; I can learn little.

TOUSSAINT (*After a longer pause*): Mars Plasir, do you think Napoleon is a great man?

MARS PLASIR: God be his judge, Sir!

TOUSSAINT (*Looking up towards the little window*): I wish that I could see the sun. (*He sinks upon his couch.*)

(*Mars creeps over reverently, straightens out his limbs, feels his forehead, lays his head to Toussaint's heart, and draws up a blanket. He then creeps to the far left corner and sits down huddled on the floor with a fixed gaze at the little window.*)

FINIS





















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